■ Business / B1

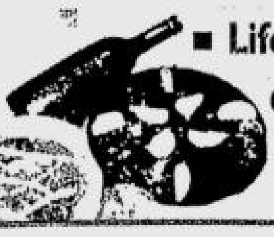
Foreign debt seen swelling to $59.4B

■ Across / A15

NPAs raid cop station, Army camp

■ Metro / A19

NBI nabs Pinoy, one of most wanted in US



■ Lifestyle / E4

Graduation blowout

Tanong ng Bayan / A18

Guingona's defection: Sino ang talo? Sino ang panalo?

Exclusive interview with the VP

Finance chief to probe why tax scam accuser is accused

By Michelle V. Remo

FINANCE Secretary Juanita Amatong yesterday finally stepped into the controversy hounding the One-Stop Shop Credit and Duty Drawback Center (OSS), an agency under the Department of Finance, which has been drawn into a P24-million tax credit scam.

FINANCE/ A17

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Tito's first advice to FPJ: Talk longer than 7 minutes

By Luige del Puerto

IF OPPOSITION standard-bearer Fernando Poe Jr. is now speaking longer than seven minutes in his campaign sorties, he must have taken the advice of Vice Pres-

TITO/ A18

NAKU! MANY TALK... MANY MISTAKES NA!

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

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website: www.inq7.net

PNP fears bloody polls

125 private armies all over country identified

By Christian V. Esguerra

MORE blood will likely flow in the run-up to the May 10 elections, with 46 people already dead from political violence since campaigning began, the Philippine National Police warned yesterday.

Less than eight weeks away from polling, the PNP has recorded 42 incidents of poll violence and tagged more than 500 towns and barangays around the country as potential sources of trouble.

"We project that the number of cases would increase further," said Director Avelino Razon Jr. , PNP operations chief. "The elections are still far, yet we already have a significant number."

Razon was speaking to reporters at his office in Camp Crame. Two hours later, at a press conference in nearby Camp Aguinaldo, he appeared to tone down his remarks, saying the number of incidents of political violence recorded since mid-December was "way below" the 67 incidents during the 2001 elections.

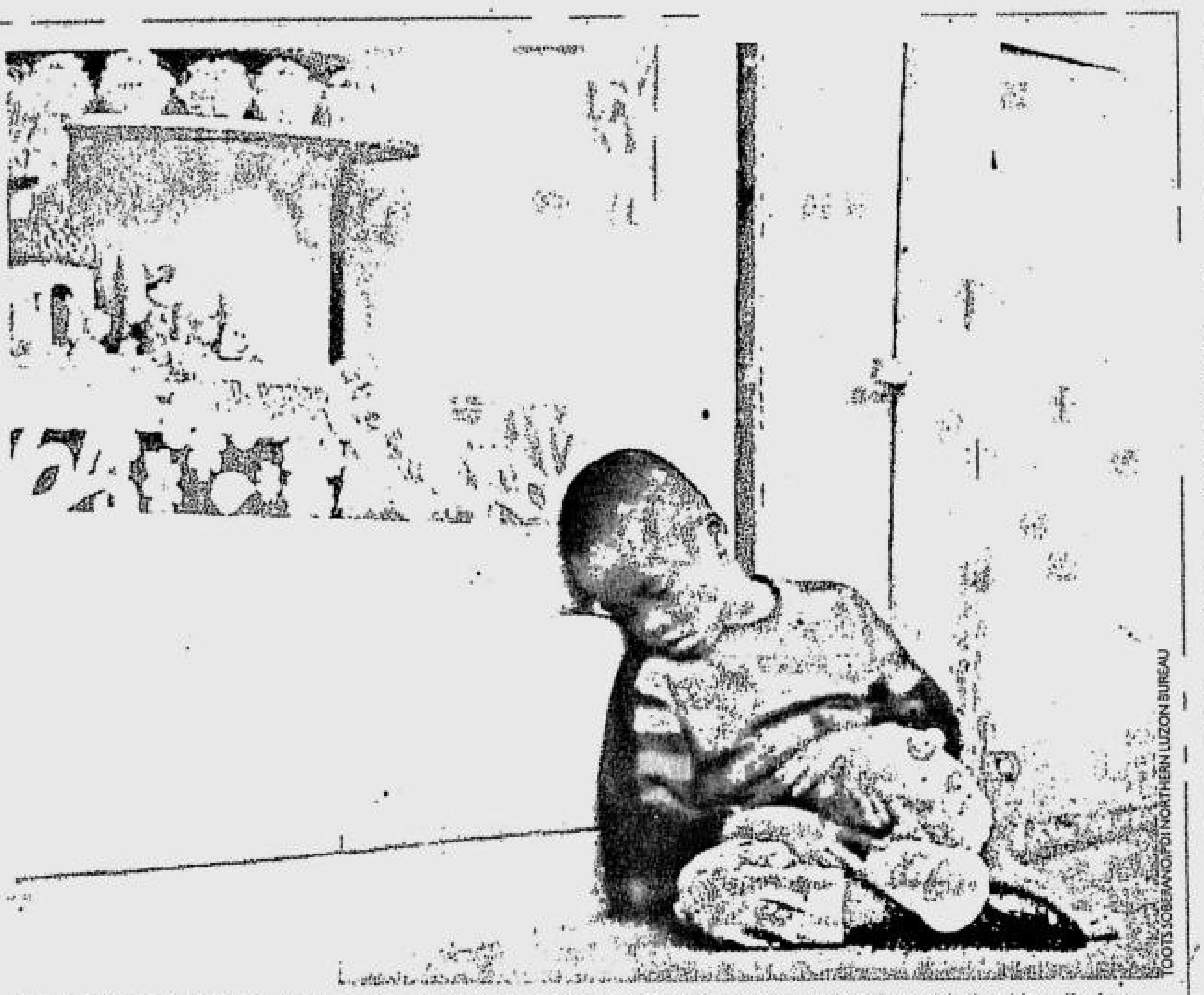
"These 42 incidents are no cause for alarm yet as of now," Razon said at Camp Aguinaldo.

Comparatively, there were a total of 110 election-related violent incidents in 1995, 267 in 1998, and 269 three years later.

Razon identified 10 "areas of immediate concern" and 531 other "areas of concern," where violence is most likely to break out before and during election day.

The 10 "hot spots" are Danglas in Abra, Echague in Isabela, Sta. Rosa in Nueva Ecija, Dinalupihan in Bataan, Burdeos and Po-

PNP/ A17



TOOTS SOBERANO/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

LET THEM EAT CAKE: Candidates must address the continuing state of the nation: A little boy with the sidewalk along Session Road in Baguio City for a bed, sleeps off the pangs of hunger, perchance to dream of cakes and pastries and all things yummy to eat to his heart's content. But the goodies on display have always been beyond his reach.

60 Filipino teachers in US to lose jobs

By Rita Villadiego
Contributor

NEW YORK—Like 59 others who left Manila three years ago, Filipino teacher Melba Cayme is wracked with anxiety about her future.

Cayme, 57, came to the United States on a J-1 trainee visa and, through Health Quest, a Filipino job placement agency in Missouri, got a job as a science teacher in the Jamaica High School here.

The New York Board of Education currently pays her $6,000 a month. But her contract will end on Sept. 9, the day her J-1 visa expires.

"I hope the government will help us," Cayme said of herself and the 59 others who came to the United States under the Exchange Teachers Program. "We will be out of work in September."

Squeezed by low pay and long hours in the Philippines, Filipino teachers are drawn to try their luck in America because of the better working conditions that it offers.

Not only teachers but also other professionals have had to settle for menial jobs in such places as Hong Kong, unem-

60 FILIPINO/ A8

2 KNP Senate bets ask SC: Get GMA out

By Philip C. Tubeza

TWO senatorial candidates of the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino yesterday asked the Supreme Court to declare President Macapagal-Arroyo resigned or on official leave to stop her from using government resources for her election campaign.

Ma. Elisa "Boots" Anson-Roa and Amina Rasul-Bernardo also asked the high court to order Vice President Teofisto Guingona, now serving as adviser to KNP standard-bearer Fernando Poe Jr., to take his oath as acting President.

And if Ms Macapagal refuses to resign, the high court should direct the Commission on Elections to cancel her certificate of candidacy, Roa and Bernardo said.

The petitioners said that while Ms Macapagal was not legally barred from seeking a new term, there was a "clear injunction against her remaining in office and campaigning at the same time and using government resources to sup-

2 KNP/ A18

Then there were 2—Roco, Villanueva

By Dona Pazzibugan,
Martin P. Marfil and TJ Burgonio

IT'S DOWN to two.

Only former Sen. Raul Roco and evangelist Eddie Villanueva have remained steadfast in their decision to join televised presidential debates scheduled for March 22 and April 13, two of at least three debates approved by the Commission on Elections.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson had a last-minute change of heart. He, Roco and Villanueva earlier committed to join such debates, even without the leading contenders, President Macapagal-Arroyo and actor Fernando Poe Jr.

But Lacson's campaign manager surprised organizers of the March 22 debate yesterday. Ermin Garcia said the senator would not join any debate without the President in it.

Ms Macapagal had initially agreed to a debate but backed out when Poe

THEN/ A18

Erap lawyers petition for 'rest house arrest'

By Armand N. Nocum

WHY not place the rest house of ousted President Joseph Estrada in Tanay, Rizal, under government control?

Lawyers of Estrada came up with the idea to allow him to stay in his rest house without violating the Sandiganbayan order that he be detained at the nearby Camp Capinpin.

Malacañang came under fire after the INQUIRER first reported that Estrada had stayed in his rest house without the authorization of the Sandiganbayan and had visited his ailing mother during the Christmas holidays. The anti-graft court is trying the deposed President for plunder, a non-bailable offense.

President Macapagal-Arroyo justified the sneaking of Estrada out of his military detention camp but said this was not the result of her own decision.

In a five-page motion to "modify custodial arrangement," lawyers of Estrada offered the government effective "control and supervision" of Estrada's 15-hectare vacation estate, which is just across from the Army camp.

The defense lawyers also asked that the Sandiganbayan allow Estrada to visit his ailing mother once a week in Greenhills, San Juan, and to undergo therapy at the Cardinal Santos Hospital also in San Juan.

Asked whether Estrada's stay in his

ERAP/ A17

ON THE ROAD ELECTION 2004

ERIK ARAZAS

ROCO IN TACLOBAN
A fast break at a fast-food chain: An order of burgers for presidential aspirant Raul Roco and his Senate bets from left, Bong Coo, Frank Chavez, Batas Mauricio and Edno Joson.

GMA IN DAVAO CITY
Not exactly a chic fashion statement but President Macapagal (left) crowned "Biyya" (queen) of Mindanao's indigenous people in Toril, Davao del Norte, has to grin and bear it.

LACSON IN BINONDO
Sen. Panfilo Lacson speaks to his kind of crowd, the Chinese-Filipino community of Manila's Chinatown.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Southern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms becoming widespread over Eastern Visayas and Eastern Mindanao. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy skies.
SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/03/18/04

Second FRONT PAGE

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

FPJ camp seeks truce with Ping

By Carlito Pablo and Norman Bordadora

THE CAMP of Fernando Poe Jr. yesterday appealed to breakaway presidential candidate Sen. Panfilo Lacson and his people to desist from further issuing adversarial statements against the actor and his group.

Poe's personal spokesperson Rep. Francis Escudero (NPC, Sorsogon) made the call a day after the aborted one-on-one talks between the two rival candidates regarding the possibility of unifying the fragmented opposition.

"We have never made any attacks against Sen. Lacson and his candidacy," Escudero said in a phone interview.

Escudero, however, stressed that his call for a moratorium on exchanges of negative statements also applies to members of Poe's Koalisyong ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino.

"We're calling on both camps to avoid making statements against each other," Escudero said. "There are some in our camp who have also issued statements."

Poe had decided to cancel Tuesday's meeting with Lacson after the senator leaked to media the schedule of the talks and even went to the extent of saying that he (Lacson) wants the actor to slide down as vice presidential candidate.

Poe's allies in turn called on Lacson to withdraw from the presidential race, belittling his chances of winning because of his poor survey ratings.

Escudero also appealed to parties outside the opposition "not to take advantage" of the unresolved bickering within the opposition.

"No one should be issuing statements from both camps except FPJ and Lacson," he said.

Escudero noted that all is not lost for a unification of the opposition.

"It's quite early in the game. There's still April," he said.

Poe's survey ratings are neck-to-neck with reelectionist President Macapagal-Arroyo and a withdrawal by Lacson in favor of Poe will enhance the latter's chances of defeating the incumbent.

The camp of Lacson, the other opposition candidate, denied that the senator had set preconditions before the scuttled one-on-one with Poe.

Instead, Lacson had some friendly advice for FPJ: "Throw (out) all traditional politicians (riding on) your back, then we talk unification," he said referring to Poe's handlers who reportedly called off the Tuesday meeting after it was hyped up in the media.

Lacson, however, conceded that there are still a few good men in the KNP and FPJ should make sure they stay. If their meeting had pushed through, it could have paved the way for the unification of the opposition. Unfortunately, it was called off by Poe's camp, reportedly on the actor's call.

There's no love lost between Lacson and Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino president and Poe supporter Sen. Edgardo Angara who forged the KNP coalition with other opposition parties and drafted Poe as the opposition alliance's standard-bearer.

Lacson chided KNP stalwarts Sen. Vicente Sotto III and senatorial candidate Ernesto Maceda for being "high-handed" when they said that the KNP and Poe no longer needed to unify with Lacson's faction to beat Ms Macapagal and the administration slate in the May 10 polls.

In what could only be a coincidence, Lacson and Poe almost met in Cagayan de Oro City today.

Poe's party is expected to leave in the morning, while Lacson is scheduled to arrive at noon today.

"It would have been good if we were in the same city at the same time," Lacson said, hinting at the endless possibilities of being in the same place with his fellow opposition standard-bearer.

Lacson closed his Metro Manila sorties yesterday with visits in Pasig and Taguig. He once again described the public's response as "very good."

He added that he would never withdraw from the presidential race despite rumors that the whole drama of the scuttled talks is part of a script that would see him back on track in April.

"If I see that the support is no longer there, I'd withdraw," Lacson said, who has always maintained that the support he sees in the sorties belie the results of the presidential election surveys that place him in fourth place behind Poe, Ms Macapagal and former Education Secretary Raul Roco.

Pimentel says he was top VP pick of 3 bets

By Christine O. Avendaño

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—They all wanted him as their running mate.

But no thanks, Sen. Aquilino Pimentel told President Macapagal-Arroyo, Raul Roco and Fernando Poe Jr. He'd rather keep his seat in the Senate.

Pimentel made the revelation before reporters here as he took a break from campaigning. The senator is seeking reelection under Poe's Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino.

He said he did not entertain the offers because he preferred to run for the Senate seat "where I think I can do more."

As early as the middle of last year, he said President Macapagal sent emissaries to tell him about the offer, but was finally able to talk to her about it when he was invited to the President's state visits. He told the President he would think about the offer.

The President's "selling point", he said, was her support for a federal form of government, Pimentel's advocacy. But in the end, he begged off as he had already agreed to be in Poe's senatorial slate.

Poe had asked him to be his running mate as well, and they had met to talk about his proposed programs of government. In the end, Sen. Loren Legarda was named Poe's vice presidential bet.

Loren confident Poe won't junk her

By Christine O. Avendaño

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—Fernando Poe Jr. may be a "man of few words" but he is still a "man of his word," Sen. Loren Legarda said yesterday, expressing confidence that her runningmate was not going to drop her for Sen. Panfilo Lacson.

Here for the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino's second campaign sortie in Mindanao, Legarda brushed aside any possibility that Poe would leave her out in the cold.

"I have full faith and confidence in my president," she told reporters at the airport shortly after she and other KNP candidates arrived for a five-day sweep of key cities in the South, that included this city, Iligan, Cotabato, General Santos and Davao.

The senator was reacting to the possibility that she could be junked in the event that Poe and Lacson agreed to unite for the elections.

LEGARDA

Poe had called off a Tuesday meeting with Lacson but opposition leaders offered no explanation. They did speculate that it was postponed because Lacson's camp leaked what was supposed to be a confidential meeting between the two men.

They also said that Poe probably did not like the preconditions that Lacson imposed for the meeting which included his bid that Poe slide down as his runningmate.

Coincidentally, Poe and the KNP arrived here yesterday to start their campaign, while Lacson and his lone senatorial bet Carlos Padilla, will arrive today to campaign in Mindanao. This coincidence triggered even more speculations that the two presidential candidates might just hold their much-awaited meeting in Mindanao.

"Definitely not," said FPJ's campaign manager Sen. Vicente Sotto III on whether Poe and Lacson were meeting here.

The KNP was in the city because this was their jump-off point to campaign sorties in key Mindanao cities, he said.

Sotto, in a phone interview, also said that KNP leaders and members have agreed not to issue any statement or make any comment on the matter.

In a separate interview with reporters, Legarda said she hoped Poe and Lacson would eventually sit down and meet, underscoring the need for the opposition to unite before the May 10 polls.

"I will respect and obey whatever decision in the event (Poe and Lacson) meet," she said in Filipino. However, the chance that she would be dropped by her runningmate was remote because Poe is a "man of his word."

"He protects me. He would protect his word, he would protect the Filipino people and the public interest. That's why I do not have an inch of worry or fear in me," she added.

SUB-TRANSMISSION ASSETS FOR SALE

As mandated by the Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001 and based on asset disposal guidelines of the Energy Regulatory Commission, the National Transmission Corporation (TransCo) is offering the following sub-transmission assets to qualified distribution utilities in Visayas and Mindanao:
(NOTE: Sub-transmission assets up for sale in the Luzon Region shall be advertised at a later date).

NAME OF FACILITIES	CONNECTED/ENTITLED DISTRIBUTION UTILITIES
PANAY AREA (69kV Sub-transmission Lines)	
Sta. Barbara-Tigbauan T/L (24 kms)	ILECO-1
Tigbauan-Miagao T/L (12 kms)	ILECO-1
Ileco-1 Tie Line (0.3 kms)	ILECO-1
Miagao-Sibalom T/L (56 kms)	ANTECO
Nabas-Culasi T/L (42.9 kms)	ANTECO
Nabas-Caticlan T/L (21.6 kms)	AKELCO
Panit-an-Roxas T/L (10.6 kms)	CAPELCO
Dingle-Pototan T/L (11 kms)	ILECO-2
Pototan-Dumangas T/L (11.7 kms)	ILECO-2
Dingle-Calinog T/L (17 kms)	ILECO-2
Dingle-Barotac Viejo T/L (28.6 kms)	ILECO-3
Panit-an-Calibo T/L (66 kms)	AKELCO
Kalibo-Nabas T/L (40.3 kms)	AKELCO
Dingle-Barotac Viejo T/L (28.6 kms)	ILECO-3
Sta. Barbara-Ingore T/L (2nd ckt-15 kms)	GUIMELCO
Guimelco Tie Line (0.5 kms)	GUIMELCO
CENTRAL VISAYAS AREA	
69kV Bandad-Compostela T/L (16.7 kms)	VECO
69kV Naga-Sibonga-Dumanjug T/L (49.9 kms)	CEBU ELECTRIC COOP 1
69kV Sibonga-Alcoy T/L (35.7 kms)	CEBU ELECTRIC COOP 1
69kV Banilad-Compostela T/L (16.7 kms)	CEBU ELECTRIC COOP 2
69kV Compostela-Danao T/L (10.7 kms)	CEBU ELECTRIC COOP 2
69kV Danao-Lugo T/L (31.7 kms)	CEBU ELECTRIC COOP 2
69kV Lugo-Medellin T/L (33.9 kms)	CEBU ELECTRIC COOP 2
69kV Mandaue-Mactan LE S/S (0.7 kms)	MACTAN ELECTRIC CO.
69kV Mactan LE S/S-MLCO SS1-SS3 (2.7 kms)	MACTAN ELECTRIC CO.
69kV Mactan LE S/S-MLCO SS2 (1.2 kms)	MACTAN ELECTRIC CO.
69kV Talavera-Asturias T/L (27.2 kms)	CEBU ELECTRIC COOP 3
EASTERN VISAYAS AREA	
138kV Pasar (3.4 kms)	LEYECO V
138kV Philphos Line (2.54 kms)	LEYECO V
69kV Bahatngon-Abucay Line (15 kms)	LEYECO II
69kV Palo-Tacloban Line (14 kms)	LEYECO II
69kV Apitong-Sagkahan Line (4 kms)	LEYECO II
NEGROS AREA (69kV Sub-transmission lines)	
Amlan-Bindoy T/L (49 kms)	NORECO-1/NORECO-2
Bindoy-Guihulngan T/L (43.52 kms)	NORECO-1
Amlan-Siaton T/L (61.15 kms)	NORECO-2
Mabinay-Bayawan T/L (51.19 kms)	NORECO-2
Bacolod Reclamation T/L (6.7 kms)	CENECO
Mansilingan-Alijis T/L (5.37 kms)	CENECO
Bacolod-San Enrique T/L (33.5 kms)	CENECO/NOCECO
Valladolid Lateral T/L (1 km)	NOCECO
Bago Lateral T/L (0.1 km)	CENECO
Bacolod-Talisay T/L (12.99 kms)	CENECO
Talisay-VMC T/L (16 kms)	CENECO
VMC-Cadiz T/L (33 kms)	VRESCO
Cadiz-San Carlos T/L (60.8 kms)	VRESCO
Mt. View Lateral T/L (3.66 kms)	CENECO
Burgos Lateral T/L (3.82 kms)	CENECO
Silay Lateral T/L (2.61 kms)	CENECO
Mabinay-Kabankalan T/L (35.44 kms)	NOCECO
Kabankalan-Binalbagan T/L (23.25 kms)	NOCECO
Maricalum-Sipalay T/L (7.96 kms)	NOCECO
Maricalum-Cauayan T/L (43.37 kms)	NOCECO
NORTHWESTERN MINDANAO (69kV Sub-transmission Lines)	
Aurora-Ozamis-Jimenez (Macabayao) T/L (61.44 kms)	MOELCI II/MOELCI I
Jimenez (Macabayao)-Oroquieta T/L (18.84 kms)	MOELCI II/MOELCI I
Aurora-Pagadian-San Miguel T/L (57.68 kms)	ZAMSURECO I
Aurora-Molave-Mahayag T/L (33.44 kms)	ZAMSURECO I
Mahayag-Polanco T/L (44.70 kms)	ZANECO
Polanco-Dapitan T/L (16.70 kms)	ZANECO
Polanco-SIOM T/L (17 kms)	POMS VENTURE/ZANECO
Aurora-Kapatagan T/L (25 kms)	LANECO
Sta. Clara-Ipil T/L (12.19 kms)	ZAMSURECO II
Ipil-Sirawai T/L (66.82 kms)	ZAMSURECO II
Sta.Clara-Sta. Barbara T/L (31.25 kms)	ZAMSURECO II
Sta. Barbara-Malangas T/L (11.18 kms)	PNOC-MCC
Ipil-Salug T/L (48.54 kms)	ZANECO
Sangali-Zamboanga L1 (26.68 kms)	ZAMCELCO
Sangali-Zamboanga L2 (29.40 kms)	ZAMCELCO
San Roque-Zambales Base T/L (25.14 kms)	ZAMCELCO
Recodo-Power Barge (1.88 kms)	ZAMCELCO
Putil Lateral Line (1.44 kms)	ZAMCELCO
Baliwasan Lateral Line (3.50 kms)	ZAMCELCO
Recodo Lateral Line (1.31 kms)	ZAMCELCO
LANAO AREA	
138kV Abaga-NSC T/L (6 kms)	ILIGAN LIGHT & POWER CO.
69kV Agus 6-Lugait T/L (21 kms)	ILIGAN LIGHT & POWER CO.
69kV Agus 6-NSC Line 1 (3.2 kms)	ILIGAN LIGHT & POWER CO.
69kB Agus 6-NSC Line 2 (3.2 kms)	ILIGAN LIGHT & POWER CO.
69kV Agus 6-Kiwalan T/L (17.8 kms)	ILIGAN LIGHT & POWER CO.
69kV Agus 6-Overton T/L (2.30 kms)	ILIGAN LIGHT & POWER CO.
69kV Kiwalan-Mapalad T/L (5.4 kms)	ILIGAN LIGHT & POWER CO.
69kV Kiwalan-ICC T/L (0.23 kms)	ILIGAN LIGHT & POWER CO.
69kV Kiwalan-PFC T/L (1.60 kms)	ILIGAN LIGHT & POWER CO.
69kV Kiwalan-MPCC T/L (0.24 kms)	ILIGAN LIGHT & POWER CO.
13.8kV Overton-MCCI Line 1 (1.45 kms)	ILIGAN LIGHT & POWER CO.
13.8kV Overton-MCCI Line 2 (1.53 kms)	ILIGAN LIGHT & POWER CO.
13.8kV Overton-Agus 7 T/L (0.32 kms)	ILIGAN LIGHT & POWER CO.
138kV NMPC-ALCEM T/L (0.60 kms)	MORESCO I
69kV Lugait-Ferrochrome T/L (8.28 kms)	MORESCO I
69kV Lugait-Inchrome T/L (5.15 kms)	MORESCO I
69kV Lugait-Alsons T/L (5 kms)	MORESCO I
69kV Lugait-Carmen T/L (35 kms)	MORESCO I
69kV Agus 6-Kauswagan T/L (10.98 kms)	LANECO
NORTH CENTRAL MINDANAO AREA	
69kV Lugait-Carmen T/L (27 kms)	MORESCO I/CEPALCO
69kV Hingdaan-Lumbo T/L (7.80 kms)	MORESCO I/CEPALCO
69kV Talaba-ABI T/L (5.98 kms)	MORESCO I/CEPALCO
69kV Malanang-Patag, Opol T/L (1.63 kms)	MORESCO I/CEPALCO
69kV Tagoloan-BUSECO T/L (20 kms)	BUSECO
69kV Aplaya-Jasaan T/L (56.06 kms)	MORESCO II/CAMELCO
69kV Kibawe-Maramag-Aglayan T/L (79.05 kms)	FIBECO/BUSECO
34.5kV Carmen-Talakag T/L (30.5 kms)	MORESCO I/BUSECO/CEPALCO
NORTHEASTERN MINDANAO AREA	
69kV Butuan-Bayugan T/L (44.05 kms)	ASELCO/ANECO
69kV Butuan-Cabadbaran-Santiago T/L (51.17 kms)	ANECO
69kV Butuan-Ambago-Lumbocan T/L (0.20 kms)	ANECO
69kV Butuan-Nasipit T/L (20.08 kms)	ANECO
69kV Nasipit-Gingoog T/L (44.45 kms)	MORESCO II
69kV Gingoog-INDOPHIL T/L (12.69 kms)	MORESCO II
69kV Anislagan-Sungao-PACEMCO T/L (12.45 kms)	SURNECO
69kV Anislagan-Mapaso-Madrid T/L (83.38 kms)	SURNECO/SURSECO II/SIARELCO
Bios-NIA T/L (0.20 kms)	NIA
69kV Bislig-San Fernando T/L (13.95 kms)	SURSECO I
69 kV San Fernando-Barobo T/L (42 kms)	SURSECO I
69kV Barobo-Cagwait T/L (65.77 kms)	SURSECO I
69kV Barobo-San Francisco T/L (22.63 kms)	ASELCO
69kV PNOC-Junction-Trento T/L (27 kms)	ASELCO
69kV Bislig-PNOC T/L (9.83 kms)	ASELCO
69kV Cagwait-Tandag T/L (29.19 kms)	SURSECO II
69kV Bislig-Cateel T/L (50.84 kms)	DORECO
69kV Cateel-Baganga T/L (35.47 kms)	DORECO
SOUTHEASTERN MINDANAO AREA	
69kV Davao-Digos T/L (43.28 kms)	DASURECO
69kV Digos-Malita T/L (59.22 kms)	DASURECO
69kV Matanao-Bansalan T/L (4.53 kms)	DASURECO
69kV Bingcungan-Tagum T/L (8.30 kms)	DANECO
69kV Tagum-Montevista T/L (40.08 kms)	DANECO
69kV Montevista-Monkayo T/L (19.23 kms)	DANECO
69kV Tindalo-Nabunturan Line 1 (15.98 kms)	DANECO
69kV Tindalo-Nabunturan Line 2 (15.33 kms)	DANECO
69kV Madaum-Maco T/L (13.71 kms)	DANECO
69kV Tagum-Asuncion T/L (16.78 kms)	DANECO
69kV Tindalo-NDMC T/L (21.62 kms)	DANECO
69kV NDMC Junction-BMMRC T/L (3.65 kms)	DANECO
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Majority of NPC solons poised to join FPJ camp

By Carlito Pablo

ARE they about to join the Poe bandwagon?

Most likely, as more than half of the congressmen belonging to the Nationalist People's Coalition, plus a breakaway group from the ruling Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats are expected to support presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. according to NPC stalwart Rep. Harry Angping.

Asked to give numbers, the Manila congressman replied: "More than 60 per cent from the NPC and at least 20 from Lakas." However, he stressed that the NPC has yet to make an official statement on its candidate for President. A series of meetings will be held by the party early next month as a run-up for the formal declaration.

The NPC show of support, plus the anticipated break of 20 congressman from the ruling party in favor of Poe are the two major events being anticipated by the mainstream opposition Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino in April, about a month before the May 10 elections.

Angping said these events are "part of the bandwagon phenomenon we are looking forward to as we draw close to the elections."

Poe was once a popular endorser of San Miguel Beer, the flagship product of NPC founder Cojuangco's San Miguel Corp. The businessman, however, is not likely to publicly disclose his personal preference, the congressman added.

Cojuangco's sons Representatives Mark Cojuangco (Pangasinan) and Charlie Cojuangco (Negros Occidental) were reported to have said earlier that they are backing President Macapagal-Arroyo. NPC congressmen led by Rep. Marcelino Libanan (Eastern Samar) also expressed support for the President at a meeting in Malacañang.

When Rep. Francis Escudero (Sorsogon) was still NPC spokesperson, he said the NPC was evenly split between Ms Macapagal and Poe. Escudero is now the personal spokesperson in the Poe presidential campaign.

Angping earlier declared support for Poe, along with partymates Representatives Darlene Antonino Custodio (South Cotabato) and Michael John Duavit (Rizal).

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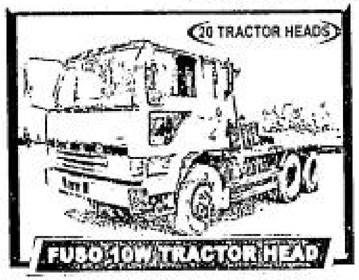
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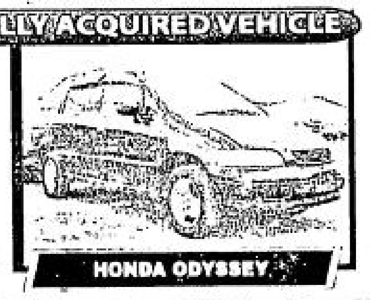
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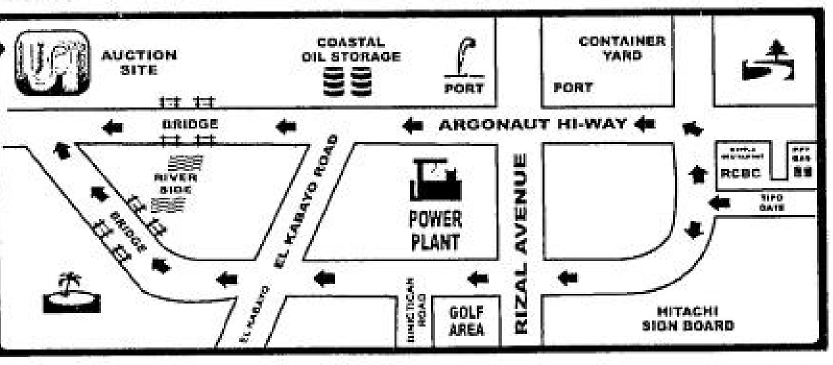

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Local feud leads to scrapping of KNP rally

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—The opposition Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino yesterday called off the holding of a rally in Marawi City to prevent any eruption of violence between two rivals seeking the support of the coalition in the May polls.

Sen. Vicente Sotto said the KNP called off the rally scheduled at the Mindanao State University gymnasium to cool down a simmering conflict between two gubernatorial aspirants who are each hoping to be the coalition's gubernatorial candidate for Lanao del Sur.

Sotto identified the two rival groups as consisting of followers of Acmad Tomawis of the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino and of Abu Saranggani who is from the Pwersa ng Masang Pilipino.

The senator said the two groups were vying for control of the preparations for yesterday's KNP rally.

"One group wanted to be the one to welcome the KNP bets while another wanted to host the event," he said in a phone interview.

KNP reelectionist senator Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said he was told there was danger the conflict would end in violence if the rally pushed through because of the "bad blood between the two groups."

"We [wanted] to avoid any show of bias that might be misinterpreted," said Pimentel.

Sotto said the rivalry had turned nasty the other day when the Saranggani camp allegedly sent a B-150 armored personnel carrier to the house of Acmad.

In retaliation, Acmad's partisans allegedly started pulling down the streamers and posters that had been put up at the rally site by the Saranggani group, he said.

Sotto said the two groups were also said to have made threats against each other. *Christine O. Avendaño*

Guingona barbs irk Palace

By Juliet Labog-Javellana and Michael Lim Ubac

MALACAÑANG apparently cannot contain any longer its irritation with Vice President Teofisto Guingona Jr.'s critical attacks on President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Presidential Spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said Guingona's becoming "an ordinary mouthpiece of the opposition against the President" was not befitting someone of his exalted position.

"We urge him to exercise the circumspection required of his high post," Bunye said.

The estranged Vice President last week announced his support for the presidential candidacy of movie star Fernando Poe Jr. whose offer for him to become his adviser on public policy he said he had accepted.

Guingona explained that his alliance with Poe was good only for the election and for the purpose of ousting the "Queen," referring to Ms Macapagal who appointed him Vice President in 2001.

Yesterday, Guingona stepped up his attack on the President, blaming her for the overpricing of the P1-billion President Diosdado Macapagal Boulevard, the 1.1 km asphalt road that runs parallel to Roxas Boulevard in the Manila Bay reclamation area.

Bunye said the overpriced PDMB was an "old issue" for which the Palace "has never been implicated."

"So far not only in this accusation but even in past accusations there has been no direct link with Malacañang. The officials that have been charged or accused in connection with these alleged irregularities are members of the Public Estates Authority," he said.

Some 20 current and past officials of PEA, the agency that manages the P150-billion Manila Bay reclamation area, have been charged before the Sandiganbayan anti-graft court for overpricing the access road named after the President's father.

Bunye urged Guingona to back up his accusations blaming the President for a project which Guingona said was "immoral and ridden with corruption."

A son of Bukidnon Rep. Nemesio Beltran yesterday called the INQUIRER to clarify that Guingona's son, Teofisto Guingona III, who is running for Congress against Beltran in the second district of Bukidnon, has not been endorsed by the Poe's Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino.

Francis Beltran said the congressional race in the second district of Bukidnon has been declared "free zone" by the KNP.

"The KNP will not anoint any official local candidate but will allow its respective parent parties to support its own candidates," he said.

Beltran is a candidate of the Pwersa ng Masang Pilipino (PMP), while Teofisto III is being backed up by the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino (LDP).

The PMP and LDP are component parties of the KNP coalition.

In a statement yesterday, Guingona said that when Filipinos go to the polls on May 10, "they must ask themselves whether their lives have improved over the past three years, if they feel safe in or out of their homes, and whether government has truly looked after their welfare."

"I know our people are worse off so I cannot be a bystander. I must try to contribute whatever I can to help rehabilitate and rebuild the economy, to bring moral governance and unite our people," the Vice President said.

He said that he believed it unlikely that the style and substance of governance of the President Arroyo would improve if she wins in May.

Guingona said that "whether the elections are close or not, I believe FPJ will win." *With a report from Jerome Aning*

Rescuers winding down

By Leila B. Salaverria

RESCUERS will work on the remaining five per cent of the half-submerged SuperFerry 14's A-deck not covered in previous search operations for missing bodies, as retrieval efforts end today or tomorrow, according to Philippine Coast Guard Commodore Wilfredo Tamayo.

The retrieval operations, which were expected to be over yesterday, were hampered by "interlocking" metal debris that covered part of the A-deck, Tamayo said. "We need more time for the divers to work through the ship," he added.

He explained that the debris consisting of metal slabs, tables and chairs covering part of the ship posed a problem for the divers as these are hard to remove.

Three more bodies were recovered from the ship. One of the bodies was male, another was female while the third could not be immediately identified.

The SuperFerry task force said that as of Wednesday morning, 73 people were confirmed dead as a result of the mishap, excluding the three recovered yesterday.

No pullout from Iraq

MALACAÑANG yesterday said the country's humanitarian troops would remain in Iraq even if staying put in the war-torn country has made the Philippines a target for terrorists.

In a press briefing, presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said the Philippines would not follow Spain's lead in pulling its 1,300 troops out of Iraq by June 30 this year.

"We have not received any indication that we are changing our posture as far as Iraq is concerned," Bunye said.

He said President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, a vocal supporter of the US war policy on Iraq, would "carefully study" any recommendation to pull out Filipino troops in Iraq.

Bunye admitted that the Philippine troops, which have been in Iraq since last year, would stay even if this would make the Philippines a likely target of terrorists.

"That may be correct," Bunye replied when asked whether the Philippines would suffer the same fate as Spain whose capital city Madrid was rocked by a morning rush hour train blast by suspected Al-Qaeda members.

14th year for New Beginnings

NEW BEGINNINGS Foundation, the pioneer substance abuse treatment center in Asia, is celebrating its 14th anniversary with an affair dubbed "Keep Coming Back to New Beginnings" on March 20 at 4 p.m.

Testimonies, family fellowship, food, games, comedy skits and songs will mark the event to be held at 23 Ynchaust Street, Phase VI-A, BF Homes Parañaque. Everyone who has conquered the disease of addiction through New Beginnings' 12-step program is invited to attend. They may register at: newbigs_alumni@yahoogroups.com, according to Dondi Ayuyao, director of the New Beginnings Center.

Ayuyao said New Beginnings had been instrumental in the recovery of more than 1,000 victims of substance abuse since its inception in 1990. It maintains that addiction is a disease and recovery is possible for every addict, added Ayuyao.

New Beginnings is now accessible through its website: www.newbigs.org. It can also be contacted through the following hotlines: 809-4578, 772-2122 and mobile no. (0920)906-6200. All calls will be treated with the utmost confidentiality, Ayuyao said.

An estimated 4.7 million Filipinos now use illegal drugs, according to a national survey on drug abuse. This is up from the 3.4 million users estimated in 1999 by the National Household Survey on the Nature and Extent of Drug Abuse in the Philippines.

Methamphetamine hydrochloride (shabu), marijuana, barbiturates, Ecstasy and now Ketamin, are the most popular drugs of choice

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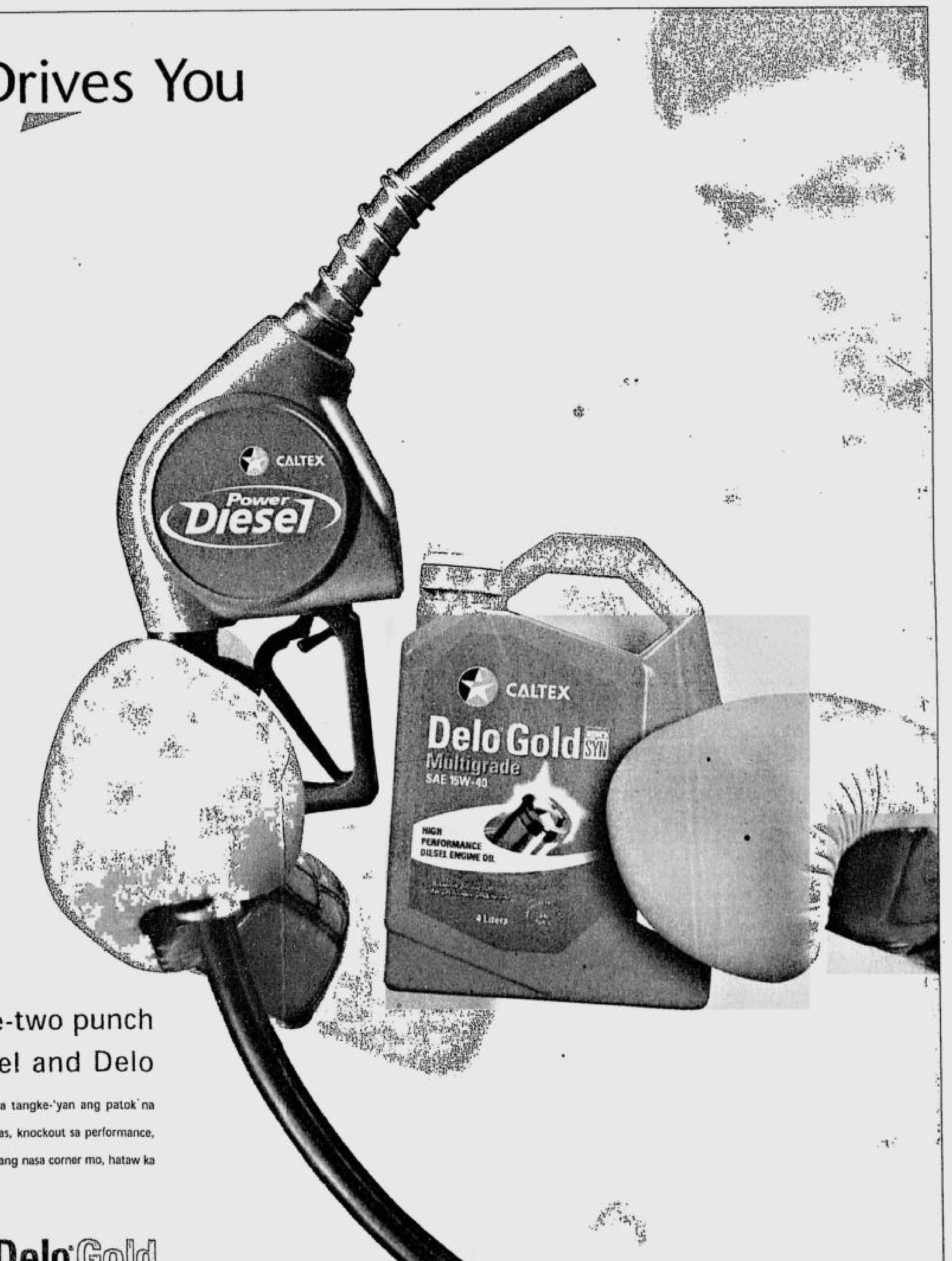

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Old building collapses; 10 looters feared dead

BUTUAN CITY—More than 10 people were feared dead after a three-story building of the defunct Nasipit Lumber Corp. (Nalco) in Nasipit town, Agusan del Norte, collapsed yesterday afternoon.

Nasipit Mayor Enrico Corvera said most of the victims were scavengers looking for metals inside the dilapidated and concrete-walled building, which houses the drier machine, when it collapsed at around 2 p.m. yesterday.

As of press time, six bodies have been recovered under heavy rubble and twisted metal.

Nalco, a major wood firm in the province, was forced to close shop over financial woes at the height of the Asian financial crisis in 1997.

Since its closure, widespread looting have been reported, with scavengers frequenting the compound to salvage metal and wood. *Franklin M. Caliguid, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

DQ case vs FPJ still alive

By Philip C. Tubeza

CLAIMING that the Supreme Court committed "errors of judgement," lawyer Andresito Fornier yesterday asked the tribunal to reverse its decision that declared opposition presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. as a natural-born Filipino citizen.

In an 88-page motion for reconsideration, Fornier said that the tribunal erred in deciding that Poe was a natural-born Filipino, and is thus qualified to run for President, on a "mere preponderance of evidence."

He added Senior Associate Justice Reynato Puno should not have voted in the case since he was in Singapore during the court's deliberations on the issue.

The SC voted 8-5 on March 3 and ruled that Poe did not commit any material misrepresentation in his certificate of candidacy.

"While the totality of the evidence may not establish conclusively that respondent FPJ is a natural-born citizen of the Philippines, the evidence on hand still would preponderate in his favor enough to hold that he cannot be held guilty of having made a material misrepresentation in his certificate of candidacy," the tribunal said.

But Fornier said the Court should have required a higher standard of proof and remanded the case to get more evidence about Poe's citizenship.

"It should be emphasized that the preponderance of evidence is the quantum proof necessary in mere civil cases...The instant case, however, does not involve civil rights but political rights...In such cases, the standard of evidence, with all due respect and considering the weighty reasons for reserving the office of the President to natural-born citizens, cannot be a mere preponderance of evidence but must be more exacting," Fornier said.

Fornier said the high court "erred in basing its decision on a lower quantum of evidence than what the immensity of the question before it demanded," he added.

He said the SC erred in ruling that Poe was a natural-born Filipino since that status is "time bound, to be determined at birth."

"Hence, (Poe) being an American at birth, cannot be considered a natural born Filipino," Fornier said.

He added that citizenship cannot be conferred on illegitimate children by "mere acknowledgement."

He said the SC also erred in ruling that Poe's forebears were Filipinos since there was no evidence on record "indubitably showing" that his grandfather Lorenzo Pou was a Filipino citizen. Fornier added that Poe also failed "miserably" to establish filiation to his father, Allan F. Poe.

Fornier said Justice Puno should not have been allowed to cast his vote in the case since he was in Singapore when the court discussed it. Another SC member, Justice Artemio Panganiban, was in Latin America and he did not vote.

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Usec defends DFA chief's travels

By Jerome Aning

FOREIGN Secretary Delia Albert's four-nation, 20-day visit to Europe and the United States are not intended for the overseas absentee vote campaign and do not violate the government's austerity policy.

"Foreign trips are but a normal activity for a foreign affairs secretary. The job calls for these trips; I don't find anything unusual in them," Undersecretary for Migrant Workers Affairs Jose Brillantes told reporters in an interview the other day.

Brillantes also said that foreign trips are a part of Albert's duty to "touch base" with her constituents, specifically overseas Filipinos, and that the trips are "a requirement of diplomacy" undertaken to pursue Philippine interests abroad.

He defended Albert's trip from criticisms that they were a cloaked campaign sortie for absentee votes, and were extravagant and unnecessary.

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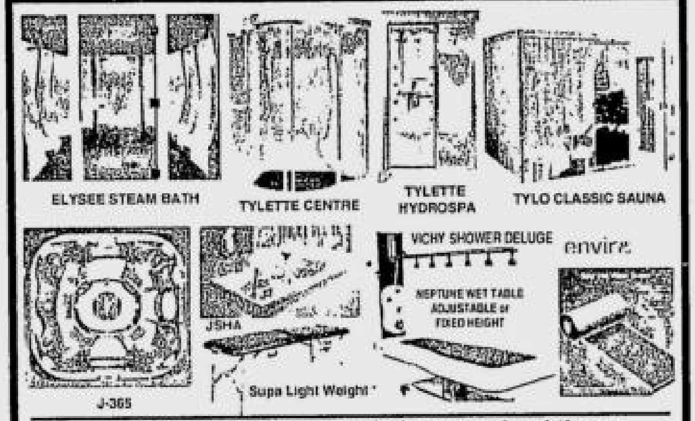

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Manifesto of Confidence for
ADMINISTRATOR JAMES C. LEDESMA
SUGAR REGULATORY ADMINISTRATION

from

Panay Federation of Sugarcane Farmers, Inc.
PASSI (Iloilo) Sugar Central, Inc.
Capiz Sugar Central, Inc.

WHEREAS, the domestic prices of sugar have been falling and some sugar producers have criticized the present Administration, particularly the Administrator of the Sugar Regulatory Administration, Mr. James C. Ledesma, for his perceived inability to address the problem:

WHEREAS, Sugarcane producers and millers in Panay believe that the problem of depressed prices are due to factors which have nothing to do with the competence and integrity of Mr. Ledesma but rather, are a result of factors beyond his control such as persistent reports of outright and/or technical smuggling, loopholes in our tariff and customs laws, lack of access of quedan financing among others:

NOW THEREFORE, Sugarcane produces and millers in Panay hereby express its full faith and support in the competence, integrity and dedication of Mr. James C. Ledesma in addressing the issue of falling sugar prices.

We will oppose any move to replace him because we believe that he is the best person for the job as he is the one most familiar with all the issues and any such move can only derail all the efforts that have already been made and the gains achieved by the industry under his leadership.

FRANCIS PEREZ TREÑAS
President
Panay Federation of Sugarcane Farmers, Inc.

TIMOTEO Y. CONSING
President
Passi (Iloilo) Sugar Central, Inc.

TERENCE UYGONGCO
Vice-President / Resident General Manager
Capiz Sugar Central, Inc.

BON ENG TE
President
Asturias Sugarcane Planters' Association, Inc.

RICARDO T. PALMARES, JR.
President
New Frontier Sugarcane Planters' Association, Inc.

by **WARLITO BAGSIT**
President
Iloilo Planters' Association, Inc.

OSCAR VILLEGAS
President
Panay Sugarcane Producers' Association, Inc.

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GMA: Unemployment biggest problem

By Gil Cabacungan Jr.

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday conceded that she had failed to solve the problem of unemployment despite the touted three million jobs generated in her three years in office.

"Unemployment is the biggest problem on the minds of our people, and we have taken the bull by the horns," she said in a statement.

Ms Macapagal made the admission after the National Statistics Office reported on Tuesday that the Philippines' unemployment rate had grown to 3.9 million in January from 3.56 million a year ago (or to 11 percent from 10.6 percent).

The figure is expected to rise further as fresh graduates look for work.

In almost all her campaign sorties and policy speeches, the President has repeatedly declared the three million jobs as one of the major achievements of her administration and as concrete proof of investors' confidence in her leadership.

Ms Macapagal admitted in her statement that creating employment was a "tough challenge," but said she would "push harder and get the job done with a mandate from the people for change."

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MARKETING GMA up and down the street in Taguig, street sweepers wear the sign of our times on their backs.

Failure

She promised to keep the pace and create six million new jobs if she wins a fresh 6-year term.

The NSO said the high unemployment rate reflected the economy's failure to create enough job opportunities for the growing population—another political issue facing the President who has opposed artificial birth control methods.

It said the new additions to the labor force—1.7 million last year—had outstripped the government's 1 million-jobs-a-year program, which mostly offers temporary farm work during the harvest and planting seasons.

The Department of Labor and Employment has since clarified the NSO report, saying the unemployment rate was unusually high because it included jobless Filipinos who were not actively looking for work.

According to the DOLE, the International Labor Organization counts among the unemployed only jobless people looking for work.

Based on the ILO definition, the Philippines' unemployment rate actually improved to 6.5 percent in January from 7.3 percent last year.

60 Filipino teachers in US to lose jobs

From page A1

ployment being, as President Macapagal-Arroyo has admitted, "the biggest problem on the minds" of Filipinos. *(See stories on this page.)*

Cayme, who supports four children in the Philippines, said she wanted to continue working in New York because of the better pay and the corresponding brighter future for her family.

She said she and her colleagues, some of whom had found teaching jobs in California and Pennsylvania, were planning to overstay in the United States and wait for the conversion of their visas from J-1 (for trainees) to H1-B (for workers).

But in the meantime, they will be jobless because of the "no visa, no job" policy in most US public schools.

Unfulfilled promise

Each teacher has paid Health Quest $2,500 to find a sponsor for their H1-B visas but the agency failed to do so, Cayme said.

She said Filipino teachers needed help so that their rights would be respected and they could be allowed to stay and work in the United States.

She also said that if she and her fellow teachers go back to the Philippines in September and wait for the conversion of their visas there, they might not be able to return to the United States.

"Health Quest is only interested in our money," Cayme said. "They didn't fulfill their promise of finding sponsors for us."

The teachers are awaiting the approval of the Exchange Scholarship Committee in Manila for them to secure a waiver of the two-year residency requirement.

This waiver, which states that the Philippine government has no objection to their decision to stay in the United States, will allow them to have their immigration status changed.

'Help your country'

But according to Consul General Cecilia Rebong, the teachers "have to help the country that sent them."

Citing the policy of the Philippine government, Rebong said the teachers had to return to their homeland and apply there the skills they had learned in the United States.

And even if the teachers manage to secure the waiver, they still have to wait another year to convert their visas to H1-B because the quota for the working visa was already met in February, she said.

The New York Board of Education is unsure whether it would offer the teachers employment as it awaits the waiver from the Philippine government.

Rebong said the Consulate General in New York had endorsed the issuance of the waiver to the teachers.

"But I had to explain to them that their visas are not for employment but for training, and that they still need sponsors to get H1-B visas," she said.

Little relief for overseas workers in trouble

HONG KONG—When the traffic lights turned green, she did not look back. She just took off and kept running, leaving the employer who had held her a virtual prisoner for over a year standing at the side of the road.

Five months later, the 26-year-old maid is still waiting for a year's unpaid wages. But she stands little chance of receiving all the back pay she is owed, let alone getting compensated for her year-long ordeal.

"Some days I went without food or water and I felt too tired to work, but my employer would just say 'faster,'" said the woman, who asked to remain anonymous while her case is handled by the Hong Kong Labor Tribunal.

After being beaten, starved, forced to work 19-hour days, and forbidden to have any contact with other maids, her family or her 5-year-old son, the shy birdlike girl made a run for it.

But the struggle is far from over.

The woman, like hundreds of her compatriots from the Philippines and others from Indonesia and Sri Lanka, is trapped in a spider's web of hostile legislation, official indifference and widespread corruption at home that make it difficult for maltreated domestic workers to find justice.

Helpers for Domestic Helpers (HDH), a charity run by the St. John's Cathedral for the past 14 years, is attempting to chip away at the problem, giving Hong Kong's downtrodden maids a voice.

'Firefighting'

"We are just firefighting. The main issues are immigration and inequity in the Hong Kong courts, but many of the girls' problems begin in their home countries," said Jane Record, a British lawyer doing pro bono work at the HDH.

One of the biggest problems that girls from both the Philippines and Indonesia face is corruption at recruitment agencies, which charge fees of many months' salary in return for an employment contract, said HDH manager Holly Carlos Allan.

Not enough jobs

Many agencies do little to vet employers, and are often in cahoots with loan sharks who lend prospective employees money at sky-high interest rates, leaving the girls with huge debts to pay off and nowhere to turn when they are maltreated.

The crux of the problem is that there are not enough jobs, and too many workers and agencies are exploiting the situation, said Maruja Asis, director of research at the Scalabrini Migration Centre in Manila.

"Migrants do not report the irregularities of recruitment agencies for fear that this might affect their chances of going abroad. There is also the perception that even if they file a report, the wheels of justice are not fast enough," she said.

While the laws to protect migrant workers in the Philippines are clear-cut, enforcement is lax and, to compound the problem, many migrants do not seek help from the government or voluntary agencies.

"We have a lot of regulations, but if enforcement is rather loose, this leaves room for licensed agencies committing irregularities. Some corruption also takes place," said Asis.

"The Philippine consulate would hear complaints repeatedly against the same agency, so it should be very clear what the problem is. But it's still operating, so they are not serious about investigating," said Allan.

Odds against them

Domestic helpers in Hong Kong who face abuse or maltreatment find that the odds are stacked against them if they try to seek justice.

They are prohibited from leaving their jobs to work for another employer and have to prove maltreatment before they are granted leave of stay or another work visa.

When the case goes to court, the maid is not allowed to look for a new job. But employers can look for a new maid and keep adjourning the court proceedings if they are busy at work, leaving the complainant at the mercy of her friends or her church, said a lawyer.

"There is a lot of pressure on the maid to settle these cases but no pressure on their employer," the lawyer said.

For the 26-year-old who lost a year of her life doing unpaid work in horrendous conditions in Hong Kong, the struggle goes on.

Police say there is not enough evidence to initiate criminal proceedings, while her employer has already adjourned the compensation hearing once, leaving her unable to earn money to pay off her loans. *AFP*

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Justice
BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION
Intramuros, Manila

March 10, 2004

MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR NO. AFF-04-01

RULES GOVERNING PHILIPPINE CITIZENSHIP UNDER REPUBLIC ACT (R.A.) NO. 9225 AND ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER (A.O.) NO. 91, SERIES OF 2004

WHEREAS, R.A. No. 9225 declares that natural-born citizens of the Philippines who become citizens of another country shall be deemed not to have lost their Philippine citizenship under conditions provided therein;

WHEREAS, A.O. No. 91, Section 1 designates the Bureau of Immigration (BI), in consultation with the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Department of Justice (DOJ), Office of the Civil Registrar-General, National Statistics Office (NSO), as the implementing agency of R.A. No. 9225;

WHEREAS, R.A. No. 91, Section 2 authorizes the BI to promulgate and issue rules and regulations to implement R.A. No. 9225;

WHEREFORE, by authority of A.O. No. 91 Section 2 in relation to Commonwealth Act No. 613, Section 3, as amended, the following rules are hereby adopted to carry out the provisions of R.A. No. 9225.

*Section 1. **Coverage.*** – These rules shall apply to former natural-born citizens of the Philippines, as defined by Philippine law and jurisprudence, who have lost their Philippine citizenship by reason of their naturalization as citizens of a foreign country.

*Section 2. **Former natural-born Philippine citizen already in the Philippines and a BI-registered alien*** – A former natural-born citizen of the Philippines who is already in the Philippines and registered in the BI shall file a petition under oath to the Commissioner of Immigration for the cancellation of Alien Certificate of Registration (ACR) and issuance of an Identification Certificate (IC), as the case may be, under R.A. No. 9225.

*Section 3. **Former natural-born Philippine citizen who is abroad but a BI-registered alien*** – A former natural born citizen of the Philippines who is abroad but is a BI-registered alien shall file a petition under oath to the nearest Philippine Foreign Post for evaluation. Threafter, it shall forward the entire records to the Commissioner of Immigration for the cancellation of Alien Certificate of Registration (ACR) and issuance of an IC under R.A. No. 9225.

*Section 4 **Former natural-born Philippine citizen already in the Philippines and not a BI-registered alien*** – A former natural-born citizen of the Philippines who is already in the Philippines but has not registered with the BI within sixty (60) days from date of his arrival shall file a petition under oath to the Commissioner of Immigration for the issuance of an IC under R.A. No. 9225.

*Section 5. **Former natural-born Philippine citizen who is abroad and not a BI-registered alien*** – A former natural-born citizen of the Philippines who is abroad and is not a BI-registered alien shall file a petition under oath to the nearest Philippine Foreign Post for the issuance of an IC under R.A. 9225.

*Section 6. **Forwarding address. Photographs.*** – In all petitions under Sections 2 to 5 hereof, the applicant must indicate his or her latest forwarding address. Three (3) recent 2" x 2" photographs of the applicant (front, left side, and right side views over white background) shall be attached to the petition.

*Section 7. **Fees.*** – Each applicant under these Rules shall pay a one-time fee for the processing of the application and issuance of the corresponding IC.

Applicants already in the Philippines shall attach the official receipt for the amount of P2,500.00 as proof of payment of processing fee. Applicants who are abroad shall attach the official receipt for the amount of US$50 or its equivalent in foreign currency acceptable to the Philippine Foreign Post concerned.

*Section 8. **Proof as natural-born citizen of the Philippines.*** – A former natural-born citizen of the Philippines, who was born in the Philippines, shall submit the NSO-authenticated copy of his or her birth certificate.

On the other hand, a former natural-born citizen of the Philippines, who was born abroad, shall submit the original copy of the Report of Birth issued by the Philippine Foreign Post and in applicable cases, the Birth Certificate issued by competent foreign authorities.

Those documents shall be sufficient to establish that the applicant is a natural-born citizen of the Philippines for purposes of these Rules.

*Section 9. **Submission of the Oath of Allegiance*** – Applicants under these Rules shall also sign and attach an Oath of Allegiance to the Republic of the Philippines as follows:

> *I (name of the applicant) solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines and obey the laws and local orders promulgated by the duly constituted authorities of the Philippines, and I hereby declare that I recognize and accept the supreme authority of the Philippines and will maintain true faith and allegiance thereto, and that I impose this obligation upon myself voluntarily without mental reservation or purpose of evasion.*

*Section 10. **Strict compliance. Effect of non-compliance.*** – All petitions must strictly comply with the preceding requirements prior to filing at the Office of the Commissioner or at the nearest Philippine Foreign Post, as the case may be. After the filing of the petition, the same shall be assigned to an evaluating officer who shall evaluate the petition without further proceedings.

In the case of petitions that do not comply with the requirements, the applicant shall be notified to submit the required documents within thirty (30) days from receipt thereof. Otherwise, the petition shall not be favorably acted upon by the Bureau of Immigration or by the Philippine Foreign Post.

If after evaluation, the documents submitted fail to establish that the applicant is a natural-born citizen of the Philippines, the applicant shall be notified of such fact in writing by the Commissioner of Immigration or by the Philippine Foreign Post.

*Section 11. **Approval Procedures.*** If the petition is found to be sufficient in form and in substance, the evaluating officer shall submit the findings and recommendation to the Commissioner of Immigration or Consul-General, as the case may be, within five (5) days from date of assignment.

For applications filed under Sections 2 and 4 of these Rules, the Commissioner of Immigration shall issue, within five (5) days from receipt thereof, an Order of Approval indicating that the petition complies with the provisions of R.A. No. 9225 and its IRR, and further direct the Chief of the Alien Registration Division (ARD) to cancel the subject ACR and/or to issue the corresponding IC to the applicant. Each cancelled ACR shall, however, be attached to the Order of Approval to form part of the records of the applicant.

For applications filed under Sections 3 and 5 of these Rules, the Consul-General shall issue, within five (5) days from receipt thereof, the Order of Approval indicating that the petition complies with the provisions of R.A. No. 9225 and its IRR. He shall then transmit copies of the Order of Approval, Oath of Allegiance, including the authenticated Record of Birth or Birth Certificate to the BI. Immediately upon receipt thereof, the BI shall issue the corresponding IC to the applicant and forward the same to the Philippine Foreign Post concerned. If the applicant is a BI-registered alien, the BI shall also cancel the subject ACR.

*Section 12. **Conferment of Philippine citizenship. Conditions.*** – Subject to full compliance with these Rules, the Oath of Allegiance shall be the final act that confers Philippine citizenship.

In case the applicant is in the Philippines, he may take his Oath of Allegiance before the Commissioner of Immigration or any officer authorized under existing laws to administer oath. In the latter case, the applicant must submit the Oath of Allegiance to the BI to form part of his records.

In case the applicant is abroad, only the Consul General or a duly commissioned foreign service officer of the Philippine Foreign Post concerned shall administer the Oath of Allegiance.

The Oath of Allegiance shall thereafter be registered in accordance with the provisions of the Civil Registry laws.

*Section 13. **Repository of Records.*** – The BI Records Section shall maintain the integrity of all the documents filed under these Rules. It shall send official copies of the Order of Approval and Oath of Allegiance to the NSO.

*Section 14. **Copies for the Applicant. Identification Certificate. Correction of errors.*** – The applicant shall be provided with an official copies of the Order of Approval and the Oath of Allegiance. Further, all IC's issued under these Rules shall indicate Philippine citizenship under R.A. No. 9225 and A.O. No. 91, s. 2004. Any clerical error or errors in the entries of the IC may be corrected, upon written request to and approval by the Commissioner of Immigration. The NSO shall be promptly provided with a copy of the corrected IC.

*Section 15. **Confidentiality of Records.*** – Any application, document or information given before the Bureau of Immigration or any Philippine Foreign Post shall not be divulged in any manner to any person or entity without the express written consent of the person to whom such application, record or information belongs.

*Section 16. **Other beneficiaries of R.A. No. 9225.*** – This memorandum circular shall equally apply to the unmarried child, whether legitimate, illegitimate or adopted, below eighteen (18) years of age, of those who re-acquire Philippine citizenship upon the effectivity of R.A. 9225.

*Section 17. **Exemption from administrative review. Limitations.*** – The conferment of the Philippine citizenship under these Rules shall no longer be subject to the affirmation by the Secretary of Justice pursuant to DOJ Policy Directive of 7 September 1970 and Opinion No. 108, s. 1996.

However, Philippine citizenship under these Rules may be revoked by competent authority upon a substantive finding of fraud, misrepresentation or concealment on the part of the applicant.

*Section 18. **Effectivity.*** – This memorandum circular takes effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

ALIPIO F. FERNANDEZ, JR.
Commissioner

APPROVED:

MA. MERCEDITAS N. GUTIERREZ
Acting Secretary
Department of Justice

[illegible]

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, March 18, 2004
3rd Week of Lent

1st Reading: Jer 7:23-28
Gospel: Lk 11:14-23

One day Jesus was driving out a dumb demon. When the demon had been driven out, the mute person could speak, and the people were amazed. Yet some of them said, "He drives out demons by the power of Beelzebul, the chief of the demons." So others wanted to put him to the test by asking him for a heavenly sign.

But Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, "Every nation divided by civil war is on the road to ruin, and will fall. If Satan also is divided, his empire is coming to an end. How can you say that I drive out demons by calling upon Beelzebul? If I drive them out by Beelzebul, by whom do your fellow members drive out demons? They will be your judge, then.

But suppose I drive out demons by the finger of God; would not this mean that the kingdom of God has come upon you? As long as the strong and armed man guards his house, his goods are safe. But when a stronger one attacks and overcomes him, the challenger takes away all the weapons he relied on and disposes of his spoils.

Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me, scatters."

Commentary

Distinguishing schizophrenia from "normal" conditions, R.D. Laing (in The Divided Self) wrote, "In the 'normal' person a good number of actions may be virtually mechanical. These, however do not preclude the emergence of spontaneous expressions, and they are not so completely "against the grain" that the individual seeks actively to repudiate them as foreign bodies lodged in his make-up."

Jesus was fully human, so it would not be a denial of his divinity to think that he did many things in that habitual, "ordinary" manner. But some people claimed that it was by the power of Beelzebul that Jesus cast out demons. This amounted to a claim that his life was split in two: that he was possessed by a power (a "foreign body", as Laing called it) that was only using him for its own purposes; that he was (in Laing's terms) schizoid or at least hysterical. He replied, "Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste." Jesus is not divided against himself, nor even is the kingdom of Beelzebul divided against itself. It is by the unified power of God that he casts out demons, not by some schizoid self-destructive power. To be possessed by the Holy Spirit is not like other kinds of possession: it is to be enfolded in love, so that there is no difference between what he does and what God does. On another occasion he said, "It is the Father living in me who is doing this work" (Jn 14:10).

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A new era in Philippine shipping begins…

Harbour Centre Port launched today

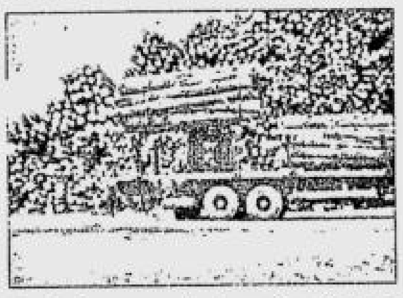
P5-billion port terminal now the most modern and most efficient in the country

A new era in Philippine shipping begins today with the launch of Harbour Centre Port Terminal, the most modern and most efficient port terminal in the Philippines.

Located within the 79-hectare Manila Harbour Centre, touted as the "Port City of Manila" and fast becoming the country's logistics and distribution hub, Harbour Centre Port will be launched today in a glittering affair to be held at the ballroom of Makati Shangri-La, with top officials from the shipping, manufacturing and distribution industries, as well government officials and media VIPs in attendance.

The event celebrates the formal opening of this world-class port terminal which has grown to become an important industry player, since it started operations since January of this year.

First pierside operations of this magnitude since 1996: 23,000 metric tons of steel billets for various steel consignees.



Ready for processing: Logs from Malaysia

"Harbour Centre was technically designed to cater to all kinds of vessels. We have the facilities and equipment to back this up. Our track record in the short span of time we've been in operations speaks well of our capabilities and we look forward to becoming a full-service port terminal very soon," says Michael Romero, CEO of Harbour Centre Port.

In its several months of operation, Harbour Centre has achieved a number of impressive accomplishments. The port catered to an average of 100 vessels per month. With its deep berthing drafts, it has accommodated vessels of up to 240 meters in length and up to 11.7 meters in depth. Ships with up to 60,000 metric tons in cargo capacity have also docked at Harbour Centre Port.

Because of its impressive service capabilities, Harbour Centre is fast becoming a vital force in the port terminal industry. It now dominates the bulk cargo market for vessels plying the Manila route, while a growing number of shippers in the non-containerized market have come to rely on Harbour Centre's fast and efficient port operations. The company is also making its presence felt in the domestic container cargo category.

These impressive accomplishments are made possible by Harbour Cetnre's superior port facilities.

The port features deep berthing drafts of -10.5 to -12 MLLW, by far the widest and deepest among all ports in Manila. Its berthing walls are supported by 27-meter steel sheet pile from Luxembourg, while dredging and reclamation work was done by Jan de Nul, a dredging and reclamation expert from Belgium. Today, the port can accommodate a total of 12 vessels at any given time.

Steel coils and billets being handled by Harbour Centre Port.

Complementing its exceptional berthing drafts is a working apron with an impressive dimension of 865 meters in length by 45 meters in width.

Faster turnaround for imported silica sand and other bulk cargoes

Similarly, Harbour Centre boasts of a 15-hectare mix-use back-up area with stacking capacity of up to 6 TEUs high, and capable of storing up to 500,000 containerized cargoes. To meet its heavy cargo capacity, the port has a truck holding area that can fit in up to 500 trucks at a time.

Harbour Centre's outstanding port facilities are complemented by the most modern port equipment, including 15, 12, 10, 8, 5 and 3-ton forklifts, and the P250-million Gottwald Mobile Harbour Crane, the only one of its kind in the Philippines.

Rounding off its unparalleled amenities are best-in-class port operations practices such as reliable security system that guarantees against pilferage, efficient arrastre and stevedoring services, straightforward rates, and experienced port personnel that ensure unmatched efficiency and faster vessel turnaround.

"The launching of Harbour Centre signifies our readiness for all types of vessels, including domestic and international containerized and non-containerized ships," explains Romero. "We have the facilities and equipment to complement our operations. Harbour Centre is ready for bigger things and challenges ahead."

HARBOUR CENTRE'S UNIQUE ADVANTAGES

- Guaranteed faster and more efficient cargo discharging and handling services
- Guaranteed faster vessel/shipping turnaround
- Guaranteed no pilferage
- Guaranteed no hidden costs
- Guaranteed no red tape
- Guaranteed no corruption

SUPERIOR PORT FACILITIES AND AMENITIES

- Two (2) Key Port Facilities- Harbour Centre's North and South Port can hold up to 12 vessels at a time
- North Port: 865 lineal meters of berthing capacity which can hold up to 8 vessels at a time
- South Port: 250 lineal meters of berthing capacity which can hold up to 4 vessels at a time
- Berthing Walls are supported by 27 meter long steel sheet piles from Luxembourg, while reclamation works were done by Jan de Nul of Belgium using the most advanced technologies in reclamation and dredging.
- Berthing Drafts: from -10.5 m.l.l.w to -12. m.l.lw
- Working Apron: 1) North Port 30 meters wide by 865 lineal meter-long and; b) South Port 20 meters wide by 250 lineal meters long
- Back-up Area: 15 hectares with a stacking capacity of up to 6 TEU's high and can withstand up to 9,000 PSI in strength
- The only seaport with 3 superhighway channels of -10 meters to -11.5 meters in depth and 7 to 14 kilometers in length.
- Truck scale within the terminal

A glittering celebration to launch the country's first world-class port terminal.

Michael Romero, CEO of Harbour Centre Port

Some of the country's business and industry leaders, top government officials, celebrities and media VIPs will gather together tonight to celebrate the launch of Harbour Centre Port Terminal, the most modern and most efficient port terminal in the country.

Leading the launch festivities is Michael Romero, CEO of Harbour Centre who believes tonight's event signifies Harbour Centre's readiness for bigger things.

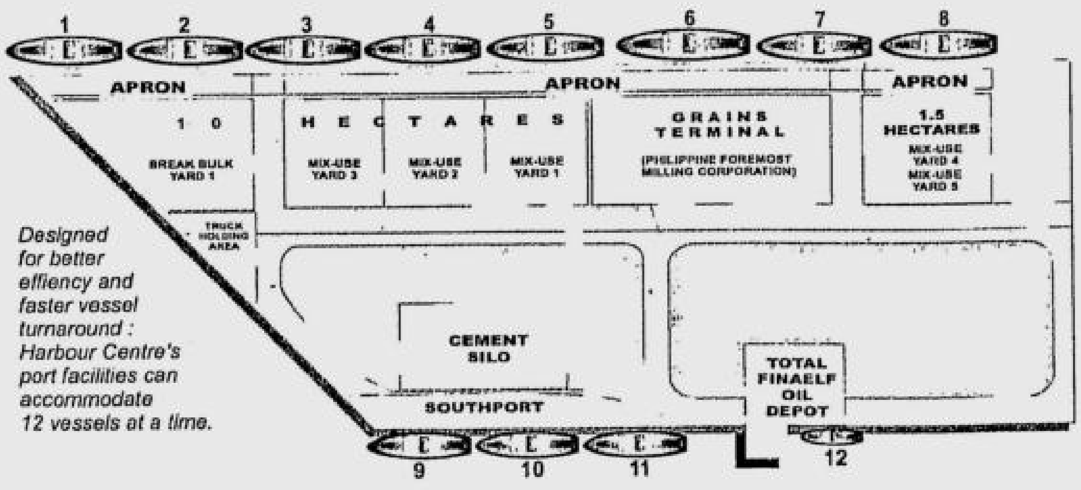
"We are very thankful for the support of our clients and business partners. We hope they will continue to work with us as we become a full-service port terminal capable of accommodating all kinds of domestic and international vessels,"said Romero.

Chairman Reghis Romero II of RII Builders, mother company of Harbour Centre Port, will deliver the keynote speech.

A highlight of the launch is an audio-visual presentation which showcases Harbour Centre's world-class facilities, state-of-the-art equipment and operations. Harbour Centre Vice President Deo Olvina Jr. will talk about the port's unique advantages and service offerings.

Among those expected to attend tonight's event are CEOs and top executives from the steel, grains, lumber and shipping industries as well as top officials from various government agencies, including the Department of Transportation and Communication and the Philippine Ports Authority.

Top journalist Ces Drilon and Calvin Millado will host the event. Top diva Zsa-zsa Padilla and former *Miss Saigon* star Jeanine Desiderio will serenade guests with popular songs while Mulatto will provide musical entertainment after the show.



Designed for better effiency and faster vessel turnaround : Harbour Centre's port facilities can accommodate 12 vessels at a time.

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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

More US allies fear terror attacks

WARSAW—From Poland to Australia, countries with troops in Iraq fear they could be the next terrorist target as signs increase that Islamic extremists were behind last week's carnage in Spain.

Take Poland, once isolated behind the Iron Curtain and now a key US ally in Iraq: Security officials here acknowledge they have virtually no experience dealing with terrorism, and leaders are warning citizens to wake up to the threat.

Most nations contributing to the Iraq mission say they will remain in the peacekeeping force despite the Madrid bombings, which killed 201 people Thursday.

But Spanish Prime Minister-elect Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero announced that he would withdraw his country's 1,300 peacekeepers by June 30 unless the United Nations takes over in Iraq.

Honduras, which also was scheduled to end its mission at that time, said Tuesday it plans to bring home its 370 troops and would extend it "only if the United Nations asks."

Spanish investigators have arrested several suspects, including a man linked to the alleged leader of the country's al-Qaida cell. European intelligence agencies also are trying to identify a purported al-Qaida operative who claimed in a videotape that the group carried out the bombings to punish Spain's backing of the US-led war in Iraq.

Zapatero, a Socialist, was swept into power during elections Sunday, three days after the Madrid attacks. Most Spaniards had opposed the previous government's support of the Iraq war, and many believed conservative Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar's pro-US policies made Spain a target for terrorists.

The events in Spain have raised the specter that al-Qaida—if indeed it was responsible—may seek to influence elections elsewhere with strategically timed attacks, though government officials generally deny the link.

Denmark, a country with low crime and few visible security jitters after the Madrid attacks, would seem an unlikely target. But it sent 410 troops to Iraq, and a local analyst said the Spanish election sent "an unfortunate signal that international terror pays."

"Now they will try to repeat the success in other countries that have supported the war against terror, hoping they can scare them to pull out the troops," Peter Viggo Jacobsen of the Danish Institute for International Studies said.

Even more exposed is Poland, which Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld put in the category of "new Europe" Iraq war supporters. It commands a 9,500-strong multinational force as part of the 36-nation coalition.

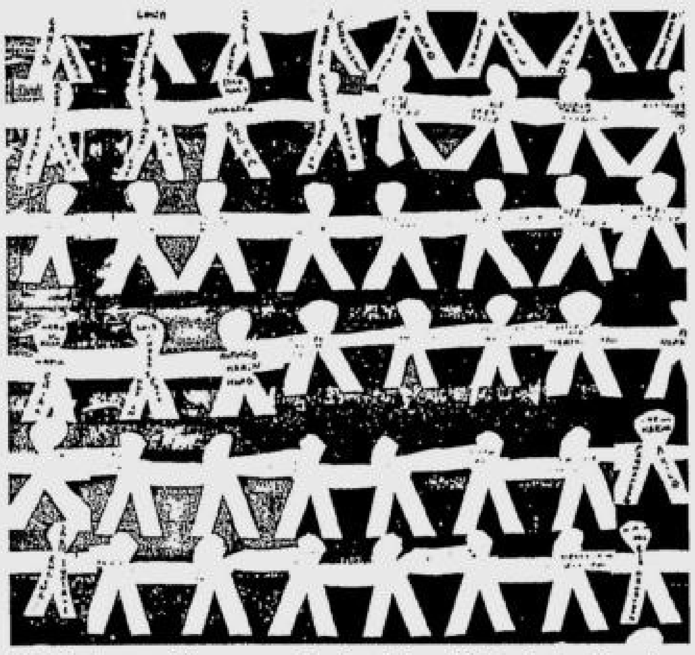
A November poll found that 75 percent of Poles feared their country's role in Iraq would lead to a terrorist attack at home. Since the Madrid bombings, Poland has increased security at airports, train stations and borders.

The Madrid bombings "brought the threat to our doorstep," Marek Siwiec, the national security adviser to President Aleksander Kwasniewski, said.

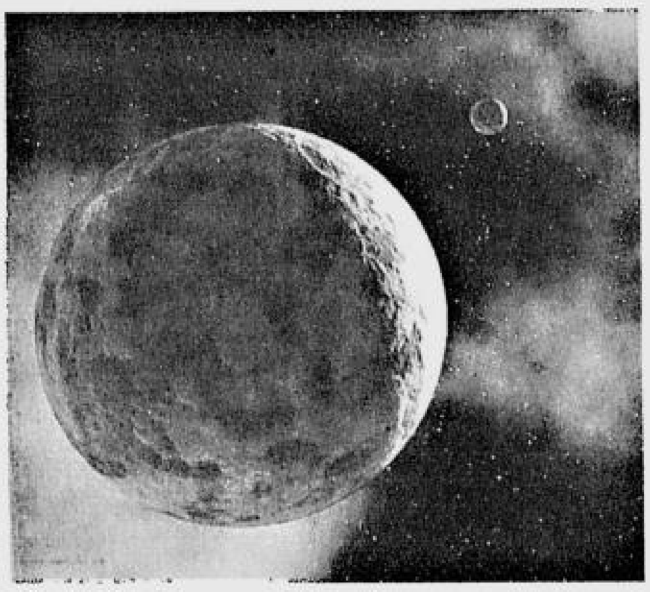
"People realize we could be the target of terrorists. Some say they are afraid of traveling by subway," Warsaw-based defense analyst Wojciech Luczak said.

In Italy, whose next election is scheduled for 2006, leaders insist the country would be a target even if it hadn't contributed 3,000 troops to Iraq—a commitment the government said it would not change.

"Iraq has nothing to do with it. Italy, like all the democratic countries in the world, is a target," Foreign Minister Franco Frattini told the La Repubblica daily. *AP*



ROWS of paper dolls representing the victims of the train bombings in Madrid hang on a wall at Madrid El Pozo railway station. The series of March 11 bombings killed 201 people and injured 1,500. REUTERS



NEW PLANET
In this artist's visualization released by Nasa on March 15, the newly discovered planet-like object, dubbed "Sedna," is shown where it resides at the outer edges of the known solar system. The object is so far away that the Sun appears as an extremely bright star instead of the large, warm disc observed from Earth. All that is known about Sedna's appearance is that it has a reddish hue, almost as red and reflective as the planet Mars. In the distance is a hypothetical small moon, which scientists believe may be orbiting this distant body. AFP

More than 40 dead in Russian gas blast

ARKHANGELSK, Russia—Rescuers clambered through the ruins of a collapsed apartment building looking for survivors Wednesday, but hope was dwindling more than 24 hours after an apparent natural gas explosion tore through the nine-story structure in northern Russia.

The death toll rose to 43 early Wednesday, a regional police official said. Seven of the dead were children, said Sergei Vlasov, spokesperson for Russia's Emergency situations ministry.

"Unfortunately, there is very little probability that people are alive under the debris," Deputy Emergency Situations Minister Yuri Vorobyov told Russia's NTV television, which reported the death toll at 45 people.

Police searched for two homeless men suspected of triggering the deadly blast by stealing metal caps from gas pipes to sell for scrap.

The explosion ripped through a prefabricated building in Arkhangelsk, a White Sea port about 960 km north of Moscow, before dawn Tuesday, destroying an entire nine-story section from top to bottom and leaving dozens of people trapped in the rubble. Twenty-four people were rescued, including two children.

Officials gave conflicting accounts, saying from nine to 20 people still remained missing. There was confusion because often Russians don't live where they are registered.

Rescuers worked nonstop through the night, and by Wednesday were concentrating their efforts on reinforcing a wall to prevent it from collapsing as they removed the broken metal, shards of wood and crushed furniture that remained from the destroyed apartments. *AP*

Kerry declares victory, fires back at Bush

CHARLESTON—Democrat John Kerry, promising a "great debate," declared victory in the Democratic presidential race Tuesday and formally opened the general election campaign with an assault on President George W. Bush's credibility.

With a win in Illinois, Kerry acknowledged he had enough delegates to July's nominating convention to claim the right to challenge Bush in November—a formality given that most delegate counters put him over the top last week.

"This night marks the opening of the general election and a great debate about the direction of our country," Kerry said at a victory rally in Charleston, West Virginia, a key battleground state in November.

"I believe we can do better," said Kerry, whose campaign was conservative in its delegate estimates and waited to claim victory until Illinois, another key state in November, could give him the win.

Kerry, accused by the White House in a new television ad airing in West Virginia of voting against funds for troops in Iraq, struck back by questioning Bush's credibility and saying he was blaming others for his own administration's failures.

At an earlier campaign event in Huntington, West Virginia, Kerry said Bush had squandered a budget surplus, misrepresented the cost of a Medicare bill and misled Americans about the threat from weapons of mass destruction in Iraq while pointing blame at former President Bill Clinton, Saddam Hussein or the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks.

"The president is busy trying to blame everybody except his own administration," he said at a town hall meeting filled with veterans and many of his former Navy crew mates and colleagues.

"He's pushing it off on everybody else."

The Bush ad attacked the Massachusetts senator for voting against an $87-billion package to pay for the conflict in Iraq. *Reuters*

Authorities knew al-Qaida link of key Madrid bombing suspect

PARIS—Spanish authorities knew as early as 2001 that Jamal Zougam, a central suspect in the Madrid bombings, had contacts with accused terrorists linked to al-Qaida, an investigator said.

Despite his suspicious ties, Zougam maneuvered with ease in Spain while making extensive contacts with key militants, from the alleged leader of the Spanish al-Qaida cell to a Kurdish guerrilla group in Iraq, according to court documents and wiretapped conversations.

Zougam also traveled back and forth to his hometown of Tangiers, Morocco, which he left on April 20, 2003—just weeks before a deadly bombing in Casablanca, Morocco, killed 45 people, including 12 attackers.

Zougam was placed under surveillance after the Casablanca bombings, Moroccan officials said on Tuesday. He was one of three Moroccans arrested over the weekend after Thursday's bombings in Madrid, which killed 201 people.

Jean-Charles Brisard, a French private investigator, said that in a conversation wiretapped by Spanish police, Zougam and his half-brother Mohamed Chaoui—also arrested in the Madrid case—were described as being close to Said Chedadi, an alleged al-Qaida member jailed in Spain.

Chedadi was arrested weeks after the Sept. 11 terror attacks in the United States on charges that he belonged to al-Qaida and that he had a hand in the preparation and carrying out of the attacks.

The wiretapped call is cited in whom German authorities reportedly believe was appointed by al-Qaida's leadership to arrange attacks in Europe.

Moroccan officials also believe al-Zarqawi ordered the attacks in Casablanca, and US officials blamed al-Zarqawi for the March 2 bombings in Iraq that killed at least 181 Shiite Muslim pilgrims. The Jordanian militant also is believed to have been behind the 2002 killing of Laurence Foley, a US aid worker in Jordan. *AP*

Awol in Iraq, soldier turns protester

By Pam Belluck

BOSTON—For the last five months, S/Sgt. Camilo Mejia of the Army National Guard has done his very best to disappear.

He avoided his home and family in Miami, even his 3-year-old daughter, instead holing up with friends in Boston and New York City. He paid cash everywhere he went and traveled mostly by bus so as not to risk being stopped by a state trooper.

"I haven't been home and I haven't been driving my car," Mejia said Monday. "It's been very difficult because you can't get on with your life."

Such is the world of a military deserter, and Mejia, 28, has been one since October, when he was allowed home from Iraq on a two-week furlough seeking to be discharged and failed to report back to his unit.

On Monday, however, he turned himself in to the military authorities at Hanscom Air Force Base in Concord, Mass., and said he wanted to be considered a conscientious objector.

"I made the decision to disagree with this war," Mejia said in an interview, asserting that his commanders had unnecessarily put soldiers in harm's way and that his commanders were too quick to take the lives of Iraqis. "I think this war is particularly immoral."

Mejia is one of about 7,500 soldiers who desert each year from a force of 1.4 million, including Guard units, defense department statistics show. In the Army, only a handful of soldiers have sought conscientious objector status. Last year, 31 of 60 applications were approved, Martha Rudd, an Army spokesperson, said. So far this year, two of five applications have been approved.

Mejia took the unusual step of making his surrender public: He spoke at a news conference on Monday morning and arrived at the Air Force base with cheering peace activists. Officials at Hanscom ordered him to take the next flight to Miami. He was to report to his Guard unit to await a decision about whether his application would be granted or whether he would face military charges, said his lawyer, Louis Font, and a spokesperson for the Florida National Guard, Lt. Col. Ron Tittle.

Font said Mejia would comply. His unit, the First Battalion, 124th Infantry, returned from Iraq this month, suggesting that Mejia was unlikely to be sent back to Iraq, Tittle said.

A native of Nicaragua, Mejia is the son of a well-known singer in Managua, Carlos Mejia Godoy, who became a kind of cultural apostle of the Sandinista revolution, which engendered anti-American feeling.

As a teenager, Mejia moved to the United States with his mother, Maritza Castillo, a naturalized US citizen. Mejia is a permanent resident.

He enlisted in the Army at 19 because he wanted to "identify with the culture and the people" of his new country. Three years later, he signed up for a five-year stint with the National Guard. He was studying at the University of Miami and was about to graduate when his unit was called to Iraq in April. *New York Times*

Vast reserves of frozen water on Mars

PARIS—Mars holds huge reserves of frozen water in its southern pole, according to the first detailed assessment of the data sent back by Europe's Mars Express spacecraft earlier this year.

Astrophysicists pored over information sent back by the orbiter's imaging spectrometer, which is able to detect elements in a planet's surface or atmosphere thanks to the spectrum of light that is reflected from the Sun.

Reporting in Thursday's issue of Nature, the British weekly science journal, the French-led team say they have spotted frozen water in three forms in the Martian south pole.

The first is water ice mixed with "large concentrations" of frozen carbon dioxide on a large bright spot on the perennial polar cap—the cap that is there all year round.

Beyond the boundary of the perennial cap, the frozen area advances and retreats in line with Mars' summer and winter.

Exactly how much of the ice on this bright spot is water rather than CO2 is unclear. A good estimate would be about 15 percent, the scientists say.

The second form is in icy deposits that encrust rugged scarps around the polar cap, and which appear to be free of CO2.

But the most exciting find is huge icy deposits lying some distance away that seem to be a mixture of water and dust.

This ice is present "along vast zones expanding down slope in stratified terrains, tens of km wide, and tens of km away" from the bright cap, the study says.

As for the perennial cap, laser altimeter readings suggest it is a slab between one and 3 km thick and some 400 km across.

The good news is that the bright spot which is mainly CO2 is only a small part of the cap.

In the areas adjacent to it, the carbon dioxide ice "might well be restricted to a fairly thin layer, no more than some meters in depth," the authors hope.

If so, the implication is that the rest of this large slab comprises dust and water ice, constituting "a significant fraction" of Mars' water reservoir.

The study is led by Jean-Pierre Bibring, of the Institut d'Astrophysique Spatiale near Paris.

Mars' north pole has long been considered to comprise mainly of water ice, and there were suspicions that frozen water, mixed with CO2, also existed at the south pole, although scientists lacked solid proof until Mars Express sent back its first findings on Jan. 23. *AFP*

UNIQUELY INDONESIAN
Indonesian women hand roll clove-scented cigarettes, or kreteks, a unique blend of tobacco, clove and special sauces, at a house in Jombang, East Java province. Some 90 percent of Indonesian smokers prefer kreteks, which are inextricably tied to the country's history, culture and identity. REUTERS

Haiti's interim premier forms government

PORT-AU-PRINCE—Haiti's interim prime minister formed a new government Tuesday to replace that of ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide but excluded members of Aristide's Lavalas Family party.

US-backed Prime Minister Gerard Latortue's 13-member Cabinet was to be sworn in Wednesday, aides to Latortue said.

Aristide's former prime minister, Yvon Neptune, said in a telephone interview earlier Tuesday that ignoring Lavalas, which commands a formidable following, would lead to more trouble.

"There should at least be a sincere expression of accepting Lavalas as an organization," Neptune said. "The plan was to try to set the stage for reconciliation."

The list included Yvon Simeon as foreign minister; Henri Bazan, president of the Haitian Association of Economists, as finance minister; and former Gen. Herald Abraham as interior minister.

Robert Ulysses, who was named minister without portfolio, said he didn't believe that any Lavalas Family party members were included in the Cabinet.

Aristide spent his second day in exile in neighboring Jamaica, which offered him temporary asylum despite fears in Port-au-Prince and Washington that his presence would provoke more violence among his supporters in Haiti.

Chanting "Vie Aristide!" dozens of young men gathered in the tense Port-au-Prince neighborhood of Blear to demand Aristide's return and the departure of a US-led international peacekeeping force.

"One day, Aristide is going to return here. He hasn't done anything wrong," said protester Edge Rosier, a 31-year-old electrician. "Aristide represents something special for us. He represents the poor and the forgotten."

Peacekeepers reported no incidents overnight in Port-au-Prince, in contrast to clashes that killed six Haitians and wounded a US Marine over the past week.

In an interview published Tuesday, Aristide repeated his claim that the United States committed a coup d'etat, saying, "They broke the constitutional order by using force to get me out of the country."

The United States denies the claim and says it acted at Aristide's request, probably saving his life as rebels threatened the capital Feb. 29.

Aristide told Amy Goodman of Radio Pacifica's "Democracy Now!" that before he left Haiti, the United States stripped him of his personal security detail, which had been provided by the California-based Stele Foundation.

He said 19 agents who were guarding him in Haiti told him that "US officials ordered them to leave and to leave immediately."

He claimed another 25 agents who were supposed to reinforce the team on Feb. 29, as rebels were threatening to attack, were told that they could not leave the United States. *AP*

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Taiwan hits joint exercises

TAIPEI—Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian accused China and France on Wednesday of trying to influence the outcome of a closely fought presidential election by staging their first joint naval exercises days before the vote.

Opposition challenger Lien Chan said Chen was making an issue out of the drills to try to win votes and urged China not to try to influence the outcome.

Beijing has dismissed suggestions of a link between the timing of the unprecedented joint exercises—launched on Tuesday about 1,250 km from Taiwan's northernmost point—and the presidential election on Saturday.

Chen described Paris as "evil-hearted" for siding with the island's arch-foe in exchange for its own commercial interests, the China Times newspaper quoted Chen as saying at an election rally late on Tuesday.

"China test-fired missiles in 1996 and waged a war of words four years ago. This time... China and France even conducted joint exercises that are the biggest yet in scale," Chen was quoted as saying.

Many critics say Chen has in fact been hoping for a show of saber-rattling by Beijing, which claims the island as a breakaway province to be recovered by force if necessary, to push a large bank of undecided voters into his camp.

Just before the 2000 elections, Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji wagged his finger at Taiwan's pro-independence ambitions on national television, resulting in a rush of voters for Chen.

Four years earlier, China test-fired missiles into seas around Taiwan, only to see the tactic backfire when voters handed then-president Lee Teng-hui a landslide win.

Nationalist challenger Lien Chan asked Beijing to keep out.

"We hope that communist China will adopt a hands-off policy vis-a-vis Taiwan's election," the Nationalist Party chair said when asked about the China-French exercises.

"Chen Shui-bian has been trying to use a confrontational situation between the two sides of the Strait to his own benefit," Lien told a news conference. "I think mainland China is not foolish enough to correspond in such a matter." *Reuters*

DOE FUEL ECONOMY RUN FOR PASSENGER & LIGHT DUTY VEHICLES 2004

TOTAL

The **Department of Energy (DOE)** in partnership with **TOTAL (Philippines) Corporation** recently concluded its biggest **Fuel Economy Run (FER)** for passenger and light duty vehicles to date. This year's FER had 22 official entries from nine automobile manufacturers. TOTAL was the exclusive fuel provider for the event. The route was from the Dept. of Energy Compound, Taguig, Metro Manila to Lipa City, Batangas then back to Manila at TOTAL Service Station in EDSA, Pasay City

The objective of the FER was to determine the fuel consumption of participating vehicles under similar driving conditions. Having gathered this data, we now present the results to encourage the public to practice and promote fuel-efficient driving habits.

A. Gasoline Fueled Vehicles

MAKE/MODEL	CATEGORY	ENGINE	TRANSMISSION	FUEL CONSUMED	FUEL MILEAGE
		DISPLACEMENT *(cc)*	TYPE	*(liters)*	*(kilometer/liter)*
VOLVO/S 80	Passenger Car	1984	Automatic/Manual (Geartronic)	12.57	13.524
TOYOTA/Vios		1496	Automatic	7.574	22.445
NISSAN/Sentra		1769	Automatic	11.983	14.187
HONDA/City		1300	Manual	10.537	16.134
HONDA/City		1300	Automatic	11.226	15.143
HONDA/Civic		1600	Manual	9.811	17.327
KIA Rio		1493	Manual	10.276	16.543
TOYOTA/Vios		1298	Manual	8.319	20.435
NISSAN/X Trail	SUV	2500	Automatic	14.152	12.012
VOLVO/XC 70		2435	Automatic/Manual (Geartronic)	15.746	10.796
NISSAN/X Trail		2000	Automatic	14.917	11.396
KIA/Sorento		3497	Automatic	20.496	8.294

B. Diesel Fueled Vehicles

MAKE/MODEL	CATEGORY	ENGINE	TRANSMISSION	FUEL CONSUMED	FUEL MILEAGE
		DISPLACEMENT *(cc)*	TYPE	*(liters)*	*(kilometer/liter)*
BMW 530D	Passenger Car	2993	Automatic/Manual (Steptronic)	8.005	21.237
ISUZU/Crosswind	AUV	2500	Manual	8.683	19.578
BMW X5	SUV	2993	Automatic/Manual (Steptronic)	13.933	12.201
UMC Nissan Patrol		2953	Manual	14.917	11.396
MITSUBISHI/Pajero		3200	Automatic	14.216	11.958
MITSUBISHI/Endeavor	Pickup	2477	Manual	11.624	14.625
MITSUBISHI/Strada		2477	Manual	12.419	13.689
ISUZU/D-Max		2999	Manual	10.212	16.647
UMC Nissan Frontier		2664	Manual	11.359	14.966
KIA/Sedona	Van	2902	Manual	12.865	13.214

Technical Notes:

1. The standard distance used for computing the fuel mileage is 170 kilometers.
2. Each entry vehicle had 2 passengers.
3. Maximum speed throughout the run was 80 kph.
4. "Closed window policy" was observed with air-conditioning system "ON" and thermostat set to "MEDIUM".
5. Headlights and hazard lights were kept "ON" during the entire run.
6. Condition of each entry vehicle was verified according to manufacturer's standard and technical specifications.

"Efficient driving will reduce fuel consumption as well as mitigate emission. So let us work together towards fuel efficiency and conservation."

Vicente S. Pérez
VICENTE S. PÉREZ, JR.
Department of Energy
Secretary

Observe proper driving habits for maximum engine performance.

"Fuel is a limited resource. Let's use it wisely."

Jeff Attwood
President and Managing Director
TOTAL (PHILIPPINES) CORPORATION

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Big joke

EDITORIAL

ONCE in a while the Commission on Elections shows itself capable of doing the right thing. After its dismal failure to modernize the electoral process, followed by its ill advised attempt to automate the counting of votes in defiance of a Supreme Court order and after the shameful attempt of its two new commissioners to give their unsolicited opinion to the Court on Fernando Poe Jr.'s citizenship, the Comelec took Eddie Gil out of the list of official presidential candidates. In its ruling released Tuesday, the Comelec's Second Division dismissed Gil as a "nuisance candidate" and branded as a "big joke" his pledge to pay all of the country's $60.54-billion debt out of his own pocket. "All told, as logic will tell us, it is inevitable to conclude that the respondent (Gil) is not a stranger to the games of charlatans and impostors," the Comelec said.

The wonder is why it took the electoral body so long to reach such a logical and "inevitable" conclusion. The Omnibus Election Code sets down three reasons for the cancellation of a certificate of candidacy: first, if it can be shown that the certificate was filed "to put the election process in mockery or disrepute"; second, if the candidacy is meant to cause confusion among voters; third, if it can be clearly demonstrated the candidate has "no bona fide intention" to seek the office for which he is running. At one time or the other, Gil fully satisfied at least one or all of these conditions, making him a strong candidate for disqualification.

Unless the Comelec approves certificates of candidacy without examining the entries, Gil should have been disqualified the moment he submitted his certificate where he wrote that his sex was "Filipino." That was certainly a mockery of the election process, to put it very kindly. And the mockery got worse when he started talking about his platform of government, whose key planks were to get the debt burden off the country's back by paying off all of it himself and to make poverty vanish instantly by giving out P1 million to every Filipino citizen—again out of his own funds.

Maybe the Comelec officials thought Gil just might be able to deliver—even while he himself appeared determined to prove that silence, like FPJ's, is golden. Such as the time the self-proclaimed investment banker was interviewed on television and he couldn't say what his net worth was or even what that banking term meant. Or when he proposed to convert the local currency to dollar like China or Korea, apparently forgetting the *renminbi* and losing his memory of the *won*.

Doubts about Gil's capacity to launch a nationwide campaign could have started seeping into the Comelec officials' consciousness when Gil and his staff could not even pay their hotel bills during one campaign sortie. But even then, the Comelec had to wait for another presidential candidate, evangelist Eddie Villanueva, to point all of this before doing what it should have done from the very start, which was to reject Gil's application.

Gil's first stab at a national office in 1998 earned him only a few hundred votes for senator. What made the Comelec think he would fare better this time in his bid for the highest office?

Gil's candidacy was really a joke, as the Comelec put it. But the joke was not really on the voters, since very few believed his lavish promises. While Gil remained a candidate for president, the biggest joke was on the Comelec. And it shouldn't have taken too much thought and too long for the Comelec officials to arrive at the decision to disqualify him.

But while there isn't very much to celebrate in the latest Comelec decision, still it is nice to know that reason is starting to return to the electoral body.

Containing bird flu

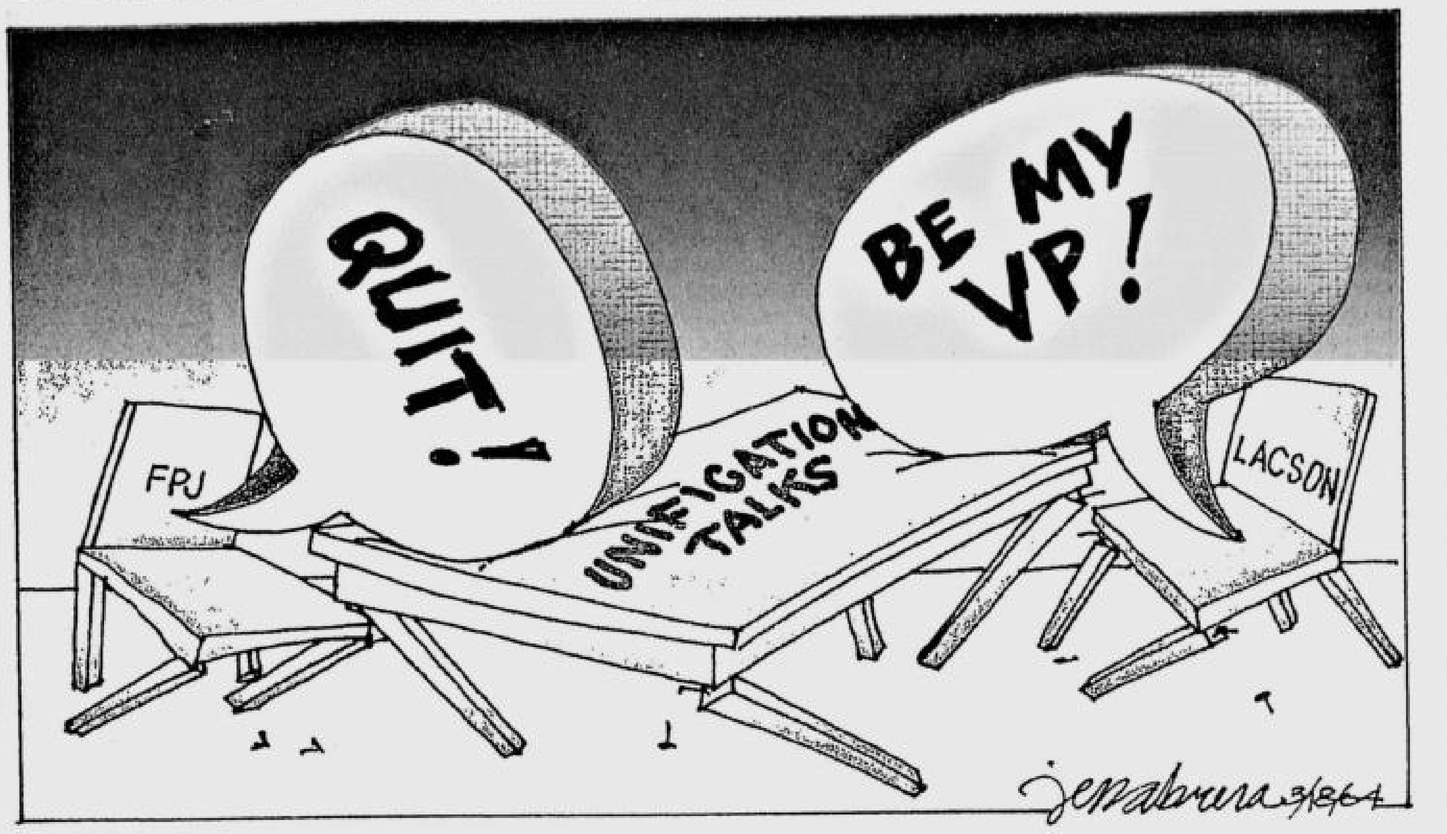
FOREIGN COMMENT

THE BIRD flu disaster triggered by a poultry farm in Tanbacho, Kyoto prefecture, is causing increasing problems. With the spread of the infection, daily life in the area has been affected. While restrictions on the movement of chickens and eggs remain in place, the areas placed off-limits to ordinary people have expanded.

As in the SARS case, when an emergency like this arises, the central government must exercise its leadership as broadly and promptly as possible. Under the current law, farmers failing to report promptly to a prefectural governor that their livestock has been infected or possibly infected with a contagious disease face prison terms not exceeding one year or fines or up to 500,000 yen. These penalties should be strengthened to encourage prompter notification.

Also urgently needed is a review of the epidemics control manuals… so that local and central governments can deal more flexibly with an outbreak.

Yomiuri Shimbun (Tokyo)



Backsliding—yet again

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

"WHAT did Thailand do that the Philippines didn't?" asked Chinese Commercial News' Rizal Yuyitung.

In the early 1970s, I brought books to Rizal, who was being held in a Taipei military camp: Shakespeare, Churchill's "History of the English Speaking Peoples," the Bible. ("I read them from cover to cover in solitary confinement," he would later say.) Marcos' agents had shanghaied his brother Quintin, then Manila Overseas Press Club president, and Rizal. They were hustled to Taiwan. Malacañang didn't bother informing their families or lawyers.

World press protests scalded Manila and Taipei. The brothers were freed. Quintin found US sanctuary, Rizal citizenship from Canada.

Now, he was inquiring why the "Asean twins" were diverging.

Over 25 years, Filipino incomes grew by 2.6 times, "cadaverous when compared to Thailand's eight times," notes UP School of Statistics' Dennis Mapa. His econometeric model confirms what economic consultant Peter Wallace observed: unless the Philippines shapes up, it'd need a generation just to reach where Thailand is today.

Businessmen and banks document this gap. Here, 39 out of every 100 scrape along below the poverty line. In Thailand, it's 13. They're "really non-identical twins," quips UP School of Economics Arsenio Balisacan.

You served 19 years with the United Nations, 17 in Thailand, Rizal said. "So, why have we backslid? "

Three key reasons, among many, are: weak-kneed economic reforms, shoddy corrupt leadership and a "demographic transition" that faltered.

"Demographic transition" starts where high death rates checkmate high births and therefore increases to population are small. Japan, Korea, Taiwan and Singapore moved through "demographic transitions" rapidly. Deaths dropped. So did births, as education and economic growth broadened. Birth and death rates balanced out, but at lower levels.

But the Philippines faltered. High birth rates persisted even as economic and social gains faltered.

And they continue to do so. The demographic middle ground vanishes. Financial and ecological erosion set in.

In 1975, Thailand's population stood at 41 million, almost abreast of the Philippines' 43 million. Both were growing at 2.5 percent plus yearly.

In mid 2003, population here crested at an estimated 81.6 million. In contrast, a far advanced "demographic transition" moderated Thailand's population to 63.1 million.

The baht and peso fetched 20 to a dollar then. Today, it's 39.50 bahts for your dollar. In Manila, you get P56.30.

Head-for-head, gross domestic product in the Philippines amounted to $1,502 (in purchasing power parity) in 1975, the new Population Center Foundation study, "Population Growth Poverty Nexus," recalls. That was almost twice Thailand's $805.

The shoe is on the other foot now. By 2000, our per capita GDP reached $3,971—roughly 2.6 times over the 1975 level. But Thailand clocked in eight times more, reaching $6,402, from its 1975 level of $805.

The spillover is everywhere. An eight-lane highway—with six additional elevated lanes—links the airport to Bangkok, 29 kilometers away. This was a two-lane, pot-holed, dimly lighted ribbon when we arrived. Now, the glistening four Don Muang airport terminals would make our idled Piatco seem like an access road.

In a San Carlos University address, John Gokongwei, who operates profitable food firms in Thailand, pinpointed five factors that triggered Bangkok's boom. These were: access to low-cost capital, "realistic labor management," lower priced power, dynamic agriculture plus a stable currency.

Thai businessman borrow at a third of what his Filipino counterpart pays. In Thailand, Gokongwei's firms pay P3.50 per kilowatt-hour, compared to P7 here. "Wages are competitive but it's difficult for local entrepreneurs to forecast labor costs here," he said. Agriculture modernization ensures Thailand remains the world's largest rice exporter. "They produce sugar at half our costs."

Budget deficits sap the peso as Congress spends but ducks raising taxes. "The Filipino businessman who borrowed a dollar worth P29 in 1997 pays P56 for the same dollar today."

Then, there's King Bhumibol. Powerless by law, he holds fractious Thais together by sheer towering integrity. When the King speaks, recalcitrant generals yield.

The Princess Maha Chkari Sirrindhorn displays the same grit and dedication of his father.

The brilliant Anand Panyarachun, as prime minister, instituted constitutional reforms and nudged the military back to barracks.

Such leaders explain tragic gaps in human needs. TB incidence for every 100,000 Filipinos is 226; it's 100 for Thais. About 28, out of every 100 Filipino kids below 5, are ill fed and underweight; it's 19 for Thais.

In 1993, Filipinos were confronted by a study, "Making A Miracle," that compared Philippine and Korean economic performance from 1960 to 1988.

From population to GDP, the two, in the 1960s, were "comparable," author Robert E. Lucas noted. But no nonsense reforms and an advanced demographic transition, by 1988, transformed Korea. While Manila managed to multiply average income by 2.6 times, Seoul jacked its income by 10 times.

"The feeling is of exasperation… (as) our policy makes never learned much" from Korean experience, Mapa writes.

Now, we're comparing Thailand's experience with that of the Philippines. A decade hence, "it will not be surprising if the new paper will compare us with Vietnam or other countries."

* * *

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Postscript to a defection

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

TEOFISTO Guingona explained to me his reasons for joining Fernando Poe Jr. the other week.

Completely gratuitously, he said, FPJ wrote him a letter saying he was supporting Bangon's platform. Specifically, the following things: reforming the pork barrel, stopping political dynasties, implementing local autonomy, promoting national patrimony through sacrifice and self-reliance, catching drug lords, infusing moral conduct by example, making us proud to be Filipino, and starting a savings program for overseas Filipino workers through retail bonds. All these, Guingona said, are dear to his heart.

He wrote back to FPJ saying he accepted his invitation to become adviser on governance and public policy. "I do so mainly because almost everyone agrees that the nation must change, that the socio-economic downturn must reverse, that jobs be generated, poverty uplifted, and the cauldron of corruption stifled by example and a consistent system not only to prevent but also to hold accountable those responsible, no matter how low or high they be."

Well, I can understand at least why Guingona would want to put a distance between him and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. There is no love lost between them, for reasons I can understand from Guingona's side. GMA does not represent Edsa II, Guingona does. From where he stands, the betrayal did not come from him, it came from her.

I agree. I remember writing a column late last year when Raul Gonzalez suggested that Guingona resign his position not just as president of Lakas but as Vice President of the country. Guingona owed his position to GMA, Gonzalez said. If not for GMA, he would not be there. I said, true, Guingona was not elected, but neither was GMA. If GMA appointed him Vice President, it was not out of the goodness of her heart, it was out of moral duress. She had no choice. Guingona (like Raul Roco, whom she appointed education secretary) had been a pillar of Edsa II while she had only been a decoration there. It was Guingona who opened the floodgates of impeachment with his "I accuse" speech in the Senate. If not for Guingona (et al.), she would not be there.

She had no more choice appointing Guingona Vice President than Hilario Davide had a choice appointing her President. Both of them owed their appointment ultimately to Edsa II, to a direct mandate by the people. As Guingona sees it, he was the one who lived up to that appointment, who proved true to the spirit of Edsa II.

Certainly, Bangon's program, which aims to conserve the spirit of Edsa II, with its emphasis on independence and sovereignty, quite apart from promoting local autonomy and fighting corruption, does not fall within GMA's horizon. It was Guingona's and GMA's violent disagreement there that compelled Guingona to resign his post as foreign secretary. He was being ordered to mount a foreign policy that was foreign to Filipinos. Specifically to agree to the entire country being used as a springboard for the US "war against-terror." And he was being ordered to mount an economic policy that was uneconomic to Filipinos. Specifically, to agree to the country taking the full force of the WTO's concept of "globalization."

It was Guingona who was vindicated in the end. GMA's claim to being America's girl only made her a laughingstock at the Non-Aligned Nations Movement and at the United Nations itself last year. And her position on globalization would also be repudiated at Cancun last year, though not surprisingly she would take credit for the success of the South representatives in thwarting the WTO agenda despite having taken the opposite side. It was Guingona who took the road less traveled, and it made all the difference.

I can understand why he would have nothing to do with GMA, I cannot understand why he would have something to do with FPJ.

His position falls in more naturally with Roco who has at least taken the same stand on the "war against terror" (he has been equally critical of it) even if he hasn't been as clear about globalization. Will FPJ raise his voice against it, too or will he choose to play it safe rather than risk antagonizing the rabid pro-Americans in this country? Erap voted against the bases treaty when he was a senator but ended up batting (along with fellow erstwhile nationalist Orly Mercado, whom he made defense secretary) for the Visiting Forces Agreement, the same agreement that has made it possible for American troops to traipse all over this country over the last few years in the guise of playing games. The fact that Guingona has become an FPJ adviser doesn't guarantee that.

What it guarantees is that he will be bringing his reputation with him to the FPJ camp. Guingona's real contribution to the FPJ campaign is not just that he improves its IQ: that was what GMA was quick to pounce on, suggesting that with Guingona around maybe FPJ would now agree to debate. It is that he improves its credibility. He is a pillar of Edsa II and he has taken a principled stand over the most critical issues over the last few years. His joining the FPJ camp removes the stigma Edsa II marked on the Erap camp far more than Loren Legarda joining it does. Or indeed infinitely more than Miriam Defensor-Santiago joining GMA does.

I do not know that politics, or the perception of FPJ as a strong contender, hasn't entered Guingona's reckoning. But I do know him to be a decent soul who hasn't lacked for courage, which of course is always the moral kind. He showed that not only when he denounced Erap before the Senate but when he defied GMA over the war against terror and globalization during her term. I can only hope he is vindicated in the future as he has been in the past. But right now, I must ask as well:

What was all that sacrifice for?

Judgment of history can't be ignored—Abad

Political Tidbits

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THE INQUIRER recently published a strongly worded letter from writer and poet Gemino H. Abad of the UP's Department of English and Comparative Literature, and I thought I'd reproduce portions in case readers missed it in the Letters section. Abad asserted that FPJ's handlers, in "cynically foisting" the movie actor on the "mostly uneducated, emotion-driven masses," are committing a "crime against our people," and that FPJ is "their accomplice, though perhaps also their victim, in so far as he has yielded to "their self-serving manipulations."

Abad based his indictment of FPJ's handlers on the fact that their candidate has "not a whit of experience in public governance," and no platform or program of action in government, despite his boast that he is a "man of action"; he further lamented that FPJ avoids debate which ought to provide him an exchange of views with the other aspirants, and that by his own admission, his "model and exemplar" is Erap *para sa mahirap*, "whose movie personality is at the root of his scandal and failure as president." Consequently, says Abad, FPJ is "merely a tool and mouthpiece of *trapos* behind his campaign."

* * *

The writer carefully stressed that in using the term "mostly uneducated, emotion-driven masses" he does not intend to "slur their essential dignity and decency as individual human beings." He pointed out that during the Dong Puno TV show with Marikina as the venue, which featured the issue of national surveys by the two top polling outfits, it was obvious that "generally speaking, our masses suffer grievously from their poverty and, if they have some free schooling, from the poor quality of our educational system." As such, he said, they "delight in emotional outbursts and partisanship and—in that pathetic spectacle of circus entertainment—merely hoot their disagreements from sheer ignorance of the science of public surveys." Abad asserted that Ernesto Maceda, "exemplary *trapo* in FPJ's senatorial slate," merely panders to the *masa's* "*bulusok ng damdamin*" (as one spectator put it) when he referred to Pulse Asia as "False Asia." Abad opined that whatever the outcome of the May 10 elections, "FPJ's handlers and manipulators will have no refuge anywhere from the judgment of history."

As an aside, it should be noted that perhaps one reason Abad was sensitive about the *masa's* "hooting" of the survey results is that he's married to Mercy Abad, whose outfit has been doing the base work for the two polling firms for a long time now.

* * *

I cannot agree more with Abad's verdict on FPJ's handlers and manipulators who have foisted him on the people despite his total ignorance of governance and how it works. Ironically, the most prominent of those FPJ handlers is the man who was once president of the venerable institution to which Abad belongs, and that was Sen. Edgardo Angara. A year and a half ago, Angara was warning fellow politicians about the disaster that would befall the country from an FPJ candidacy if it doesn't make the shift from a presidential to a parliamentary system. Ultimately it was Angara's doggedness that caused his party, the LDP, to "cynically foist" FPJ on the electorate, despite his total lack of qualification.

But sources within the KNP now hint that there are a number of senatorial candidates who have become so disillusioned with their lead candidate's ineptness; in fact I am given to understand that the disillusion has turned into a real fear—what if the guy really wins? What happens to the country?

* * *

Recently, however, I came across a letter from FPJ to Vice President Teofisto Guingona dated May 10, 2004, which should not only send Abad and other thinking citizens to new paroxysms of despair but also to a heightened fear, similar to what some KNP senatorial candidates are experiencing. What could happen if Da King were to be elected president? That FPJ is not prepared to be president is accepted by most people except his most fanatic *masa* fans. But what this letter, which must have been written by his staff, indicates is worse—that even those handling his candidacy are just as inept and incompetent. They allowed that letter to be signed by FPJ and sent to Guingona despite the fact that it's shot through and through with grammatical errors. The question is, are these the ones who propose to run this country come July 1?

* * *

FPJ's letter invited Guingona to become his adviser on governance and public policy, and he wrote that "After consultations, let me say that I subscribe to your Program of Action embodies *(sic)* in Bangon! and other organizations..." And FPJ cited, among other measures, "Give meaning to local autonomy recognizing the role of governors and mayors as partners in socio-economic development pursuant to law and the principal *(sic)* of subsidiary *(sic)*." Whoever drafted that letter obviously meant "principle of subsidiarity," which is, incidentally a favorite advocacy of Guingona even when he was still foreign secretary. "Subsidiarity" is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as the political principle "that a central authority should have a subsidiary function, performing only those tasks which cannot be performed at a more local level." The word "through" was also consistently spelled as "thru" and common punctuation marks were ignored.

Some people would probably dismiss these criticisms as petty. But when one considers that it was an official communication from one of the two top presidential contenders to the Vice President of the country, inviting him to become his adviser, its business is serious and it should be punctiliously correct. At the very least it is indicative of the shoddiness and ineptness of his staff and ultimately, of his handlers. Is this the kind of letter FPJ will send to George Bush or John Kerry?

'Thief and dictator'

Human Face

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

SO sue me. I've been using the words dictator and tyrant for as long as I can remember.

"Mrs. Marcos wants the Department of Justice (DOJ) to rule that Ferdinand Marcos is not a dictator. She wants the (DOJ) to rule that Ferdinand Marcos is not a thief. Since Mrs. Marcos cannot change history, she wants the (DOJ) to do it for her."

This is what Philippine Commission on Good Government (PCGG) commissioner Ruben Carranza, through his lawyers from the Arroyo Chua Caedo Law Office, said in his scathing counter-affidavit after Imelda Marcos filed a libel suit against him and several journalists from a newspaper that published his statements.

Well, the DOJ did precisely that, Carranza's lawyer William Chua said, when the DOJ through the Makati prosecutor's office, charged Carranza et al. with libel. An arrest order is to be expected, Chua added.

Last Sunday we came out with a news story on how calling deposed former President Ferdinand Marcos "a thief and a dictator" could get you in trouble. The present government could charge you in court and have you arrested.

Party-list Rep. Crispin Beltran promptly sent his reaction saying: "Who's afraid of libel and the Marcoses? Marcos was a thief, a dictator and a traitor to the Filipino people."

Beltran is saying, "Try me." So he goes: "Thief, dictator, butcher of civilians, traitor to the Filipino people. If I had a wider and bigger vocabulary, I would be able to describe the late dictator Ferdinand E. Marcos in more ways."

Beltran, a former political prisoner and labor leader, said the courts cannot go against Philippine history and deny the reasons why Marcos continues to be denounced as "a plunderer and a dictator." Eighteen years after his overthrow, Marcos victims are still waiting for justice, Beltran's statement said. During commemorations for victims, the crimes of Marcos, his cronies, henchmen and heirs are constantly recalled and denounced, he added.

"We didn't fear Marcos when he was still alive, we risked life and limb, why on earth should we be afraid of being sued for libel?

"Marcos cronies and his heirs including the incorrigible and shameless Imelda have yet to get their comeuppance. It's appalling and outrageous that Imelda remains free to peddle her lies and illusions about her husband when together they plundered this country (and) all but destroyed the civil and human rights of the Filipino.

"Marcos was a thief, a butcher and a dictator, and no court in the land has the right to sanction or punish anyone who believes this and declares it publicly."

Makati Assistant City Prosecutor Carlos M. Flores, with the approval of city prosecutors Imelda Saulog and Feliciano Aspi, has filed libel charges against Carranza, Today editors Lourdes Molina-Fernandez and Dionisio Pelayo and reporter Estrella Torres.

Today publisher Teodoro L. Locsin Jr., who was originally included in the complaint filed by Marcos widow Imelda R. Marcos was not included in the resolution. Locsin is a Makati congressman. It's the small fry who will fry, as far as the prosecutor is concerned. Recommended bail for each respondent is P10,000.

In an Aug. 26, 2003 article "Marcoses hire Swiss lawyer to delay transfer of funds," Torres quoted Carranza as saying: "You have a thief and a dictator, and here comes a lawyer (Foetish) saying they (referring to the Marcoses) have nothing to do with the Swiss money."

Wrote Torres: "Swiss federal authorities have confirmed the existence of more substantial accounts of the estate of the late dictator Marcos besides the recovered US$683-million Swiss escrow funds now at the Philippine National Bank."

Said the imeldific in her complaint: "The statements are very damaging to my husband's memory... (they have) generated unjust contempt for my husband and my family, and has clearly blackened the memory of my late husband."

Prosecutor Flores upheld Mrs. Marcos' complaint when he said "Complainant, however, has correctly pointed out that the said respondent failed to present any evidence that Marcos was never convicted as a thief and his innocence of the said charge stands until proven guilty in a court of law. Without such conviction, any reference to the late president as a thief may be considered malicious and therefore libelous."

Flores added that "malice on the part of the journalists respondents is likewise presumed when they published the false statement of respondent Carranza."

But Carranza argued: "The existence of the Marcos dictatorship is a matter of fact." Therefore, references to Marcos as a thief and a dictator is not libelous.

Carranza added fuel by saying: "The thievery that accompanied the imposition of martial law is a matter of history. In fact, the enormity of the plunder landed Ferdinand Marcos in the pages of the Guinness Book of World Records as history's greatest thief. Former Senate president Jovito Salonga estimates the Marcos loot at around US$5 billion to US$10 billion. The PCGG itself has recovered some P25.534 billion from the sale of sequestered real property and shares... The government is still awaiting the privatization of another P30 billion or so of looted wealth."

Carranza stressed that the government that succeeded the Marcos regime was installed on the premise that Marcos "stole the ballots intended for Corazon C. Aquino. Marcos not only looted the national treasury, he also stole the elections. That makes him a thief twice over.... Various government bodies... acted on the postulate that the regime that Marcos imposed on the Philippines had been dictatorial and dishonest."

* * *

Send comments to cerespd@info.com.ph

The great equalizer

The Long View

Manuel L. Quezon III

THE DIFFERENCE between the elite in this country and everyone else is that for the rich or well-connected, everything is possible, while for the rest, everything is difficult.

We pay taxes. Many of us do our stint of military training. We vote. We pay our financial and moral obligations to our government. And we arm that government with legitimacy. And yet, I'm hard pressed to think of any government service that doesn't involve turning into a favor for that service to get done. The very nature of government services—as favors bestowed by those with authority, from the lowliest clerk to the president—defines our country as one in which the rule of law doesn't apply, and as a nation barely capable of functioning. We do our duty but the state, when it gets around to doing its duty by us, demands we show gratitude.

Too much relies on the personal touch—the visit to the official who can help, the cajoling verging on the flirting that flatters government workers into acting on what they're paid to do, the negotiations for extensions and exemptions from those in a position to make these things possible—and too little operates on the assumption that basic services should be provided as the citizen's right. In a sense, the way everything is so personal in our country makes life a little more bearable, and gives to those who do not have influence and wealth by virtue of birth a chance to live their lives and function. The personal approach makes things a little less impossible for the many. Our common attitude toward the law, as quicksand to skirt around, or when stuck in it, as a deadly menace which can only be escaped if someone strong will throw us a rope to pull us out of it: this shows the frustrating defects of our system.

Our middle class, which more often than not, has worked for, and not inherited, what it has, and which has surmounted enough of the difficulties to appreciate that some things are possible, but too much remains difficult to achieve, is the bulwark of a modern nation. But it has been caught between the immovable, inflexible rock of corrupt governance and the hard place in which dwells the poor who are regularly used and abused by those who govern, as a foil against any reformist pressure. The doctor or engineer, middle-level executive or small-scale entrepreneur only wants fewer laws, safer streets, more fairly applied (and spent) taxes, a more predictable environment in which permits and documents required by law are issued with efficiency and not because of bribes. They want an economy in which owning a home is not only affordable, but possible, and schools that produce graduates who are competitive and who can find jobs.

It is this group that suffers the most when things go wrong, and which has been suffering the most since the initial boom of the early martial law years faded. When there is trouble, the wealthy flee, whether out of principle or convenience; while the poor have been actively encouraged to flee as well. Our economy, on its own, has been hard put to produce new members of the middle class, and sustain those who are in it, but there are many from the poor who are now middle class because they went abroad. But as times get tougher, even they find themselves not enjoying security, but instead, sliding back into poverty and having to send their children abroad to repeat what they've done. Some, maybe even most, will never come back.

When my father hit upon a rather crazy scheme to emigrate to Australia in the early 1980s, one of his friends gently chided him with words I will never forget: "Nonong, stay; suffer with us." We did not stay, though we didn't end up emigrating. We lived abroad until democracy was restored. "I want my son to grow up knowing what it's like to be free," he said, echoing what many who go abroad say and feel: they want to go where one is free to get a job, not according to who you know, or where you went to school, but rather, where you can get a job because you want one and can do it; where everything is possible instead of everything seeming so impossible.

Abroad, all Filipinos are equal, whatever your circumstances at home. In the eyes of foreigners we are all the same, looked at skeptically by customs and immigration officials because of the degraded passport we carry. As contributors to the economies of the countries in which we end up, many of us are offered, and accept, citizenship, trading the one we were born in for that of a country that expresses its appreciation by offering rights commensurate to the duties we're expected to fulfill. What is important is most of us will miss home, love it, yearn for it.

I believe it is healthy for a Filipino who is self-made to come home and buy some land, build a little business, or just end up with appliances, thanks to the sweat of his or her brow, and thereby find a new and improved standing in the community: for then nothing has proved impossible in our country of impossibilities. That person now has a stake, a larger stake, in the country than the families dwelling in mansions funded by inherited land and who find security in their established social positions.

And yet, even if self-made Filipinos do not return, or do so only in the twilight of their lives, because their children are foreigners now, with foreign ways, they now have pride. Pride that should have been theirs by virtue of birth, and belonging to a country whose failures led them to leaving, in the first place.

* * *

Comments welcome at www.quezon.ph

A piece of Buliok

Young Blood

Ping Restor

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

AS news writer for GMA-7, I have written stories of military-Moro Islamic Liberation Front encounters in Buliok, Pikit, Talitay and other conflict areas in Cotabato and Maguindanao long before I came to the place. In the newsroom, we turn to the story menu for information, and the conflict in these areas would be logged as body count, which camp got it this time, how the fighting ensued, etc.—objective facts.

Last Christmas, I covered GMA Kapuso Foundation's "Krismas Karavan" for Mel Tiangco's "Frontpage" (now known as "24 Oras") segment, "Kapusong Totoo." I had the chance to go and see for the first time, the places I wrote about. I thought: finally, the storyteller is face to face with the story—beyond hard facts and statistics.

I was not psychologically prepared for it. It did not occur to me how precarious the situation might still be, after all, we were to enter Buliok Complex, the last MILF stronghold, which, barely a year before the military takeover, was no place for outsiders like us.

Sure, military presence quelled resistance. This place, however, has been Hashim Salamat country for so many years. I realized that the chance of the opposite force staging an attack was still possible.

The military escort that met us at the Davao City International Airport amplified my fear. Commissioned by the 2nd Marine Brigade, some 20 men, in full battle gear, were to secure our four-hour land travel from Davao City to Cotabato.

I tried hard to conceal my consternation. I saw this was the wrong time to be associated with the military because the rebels might misconstrue that we were taking sides.

I called my parents to say I was okay, more to calm myself than them. I also called my insurance agent to make sure my papers were in.

Past many checkpoints, we reached the headquarters in Pikit by nightfall. I did not know we were to be billeted in the headquarters. The place was a virtual powder keg. Not to breach military secrecy, I would simply say I prayed so hard that night.

In my barracks, I recalled how, back in the University of the Philippines, when I was more an activist than a student, I used the term "militarized" to spell out terror, debauchery, abuse. To me, men in uniform wore no human faces.

Brigade commander, Col. Ben Dolorfino and his deputy, Lt. Col. Ram Alivio, received us well. I saw a father in them. Over dinner, we discussed the next day's itinerary. Colonel Dolorfino mentioned Sitio Bago Inged—home to the defeated Camp Raja Muda—Bulod, Bulol, Buliok I and II. We were to traverse marsh waters from North Cotabato to Maguindanao. One thousand children waited for their piece of Christmas from us.

Now more relaxed and inspired by new learning, I was already excited to meet the children. But then again I stopped: how about bridging the gap war created between these people and the military? How could we possibly reach out to them, when we would ride the same vehicles that drove them away from their homes to the uplands, where children were forced to stop schooling, where food was no more than a few ears of corn? I worried about the next day. I needed a miracle, divine intervention perhaps that will make goodwill shine amid antagonism, hunger and hatred. But whom do I pray to—God or Allah?

Blank stares greeted us. Beneath Muslim veils, the children's eyes speak of long suffering, of having had enough. Surprise after surprise, they happily scooped out the contents of the Kapuso Package—milk, cookies, corned beef, notebooks, pencils and clean shirts. Thanks received, I said they were welcome but beneath my breath hoped I brought something more.

Reaching the community, I realized I worried more than I had to. This military brigade has touched base with the community so deeply that peace is now decreed between former adversaries. It was hard to believe that only a few months ago they fought with neither side yielding any quarter.

The military men arrived in V-150 commandos. Yet they were welcomed home. GMA Kapuso facilitated games. Children played with the soldiers. Blank stares melted into raucous laughter. Suddenly, the children became children before my eyes. It was because Colonel Dolorfino, himself a Muslim, led the reconstruction of the mosques. It was because these military men served the community, planted corn with them, rebuilt their homes, cleared the bush from the schools. It was because they carried the badge of service on their arms, which weighed more than their rifles.

Colonel Dolorfino said the war was not about religion. The enemy was not the MILF.

It was the quagmire of contending political interests, the pangs of hunger and poverty, the poison of no education, the neglect of the children—these were the common enemies.

And I believe him.

Against these common enemies, we can all unite to fight.

I came to Buliok bringing a piece of Christmas for the children. I came back with their story of peace. This is my contribution to the story menu.

Ping Restor, 25, is a segment producer for "Kapusong Totoo" of GMA-7's "24 Oras."

They Said

Hollywood premium

"Imitation is the sincerest form of Hollywood."

—Producer Dean Devlin on the possibility of making more biblical films following the success of "The Passion of the Christ," a movie depicting the last 12 hours of Jesus Christ's life

In a time of politics

"A candidate claims you must have a heart... You don't express love by mere words. You show it by deed."

—Presidential candidate Raul Roco on Fernando Poe Jr.'s statement that what matters most for a leader is the heart and not the brain

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TALK of the TOWN

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Editor Juan V. Sarmiento Jr.

ELECTION 2004

Voters view presidential platforms (2)

FROM THE GENERAL to the specific. This is the approach we are taking in allowing voters to give their assessment of the platforms of government of the five presidential candidates—President Macapagal-Arroyo, Fernando Poe Jr., Raul Roco, Panfilo Lacson and Eddie Villanueva. The Commission on Elections has disqualified Eddie Gil for being a nuisance candidate.

On Sunday, a group of young professionals and two professors gave a general assessment of the platforms of the candidates.

Today, we are focusing on gay rights, population, globalization and agriculture (food security)—four of the 30 concerns which we we believe the candidates for national office should address.

In the next issue of Talk of the Town, individuals belonging to a group or sector will give their critique of the positions of the presidential candidates on such issues as unemployment, housing, education, insurgency and environment.

We are giving voters the opportunity to give their critique of the platforms of the presidential candidates in line with the INQUIRER's citizen-based coverage of the national elections.

Candidates gave safe answers on gay rights

By Anna Leah Sarabia
Member, Can't Live in the Closet
Co-convenor, Pinoy Pride Network

When the late Quezon City Rep. Rey Calalay filed a bill in 1993 seeking to give sectoral representation to the "third sex" in Congress, the idea seemed so amusing that only the entertainment sections in the tabloids commented on it.

That prompted our organization, Can't Live in the Closet, Inc.—the first gay and lesbian group to get SEC registration—to seek an audience with him to support his initiative, and to provide him with information on lesbian and gay rights. Among other things, we told him that "third sex" was not the internationally recognized term.

The next year, the House committee on people power, headed by Rep. Lally Laurel-Trinidad, invited us to be a resource person at the public hearing on Calalay's bill. That hearing was the first time a parliamentary body in Asia officially discussed issues relating to lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender (LGBT) persons, and was not missed by the tabloids which carried the story for weeks.

As it happened, the Calalay bill was overtaken by the party-list elections. While the 11th Congress did not have a representative for gays and lesbians, Rep. Bellaflor Angara-Castillo filed the "Lesbian and Gay Rights" (LAGR) Bill, which included the right to form civil unions.

Blacklisted

Unfortunately, the Catholic Church blacklisted this bill—together with those on contraception and divorce—and discouraged its re-filing in the 12th Congress. But that was when Rep. Etta Rosales filed the less controversial anti-discrimination bill.

Many years of lobbying by local LGBT and women's organizations, and support by a gay-friendly press helped. In November of last year, more than 1,000 activists, academics and artists from 40 countries participated in a series of meetings and cultural events for the 22nd World Conference of the International Lesbian and Gay Association (Ilga), the first of its kind in Asia. Conference organizers Pinoy Pride and its supporters met with Cabinet members, members of Congress and the Vice President to make sure that the government would not give participants a hard time.

Court decisions, meanwhile, allowed same-sex marriage in Canada, and decriminalized sodomy in the United States, perhaps creating an awareness that might have had some effect on members of our own Congress. Such a confluence contributed to the passage of the bill by the House of Representatives by the end of the 12th Congress.

Surprised

Still, we were surprised at the inclusion of "gay rights" in the questionnaire prepared by the INQUIRER for presidential candidates. We, at least, have on paper that none of the candidates denied the existence of such human rights, even underscoring constitutional provisions against discrimination based on sex.

But they gave safe, non-controversial and non-committal answers. Politicians do that all the time. We doubt very much if any of them would actually encourage the passage of a Lesbian and Gay Rights Act.

In fact, even before that happens, would any of the candidates dare to openly address a conference of LGBT persons in the same way that they meet with businessmen's groups, religious groups and other sectors?

Will any male or female presidential, vice-presidential or senatorial candidate speak up and defend the human rights of LGBT persons? Can they even say the "G" or "L" words in public without a trace of derision? That is the litmus test.

Supporting family planning is good politics

By Benjamin de Leon
Chair, Philippine NGO Council on Population, Health and Welfare Inc.

A survey of population and family planning last month found that 97 percent of our people believe that "it is important to have the ability to control one's fertility or to plan one's family."

Results of the survey conducted by Pulse Asia showed that about seven out of 10 Filipinos believe that a fast increasing population hinders the development of the country.

What is revealing in the survey was that candidates in the May elections who favor certain family planning issues should be supported rather than rejected.

"Anywhere from 82 percent to 86 percent of Filipinos say that candidates in favor of couples' free choice of family planning, a law or measure on population issues, a government budget for family planning, and a program on women's health ought to be supported by the general public," the study said.

So, it did not come to me as a surprise when the study also found that four out of 10 Filipinos are saying that the candidate's support for family planning will not have an effect on his or her electoral chances. Only eight percent of Filipinos are of the opinion that a candidate's support for family planning will mean defeat in the polls.

Religion

Survey after survey have shown that support for family planning is good politics. I cannot fathom why politicians are consciously or unconsciously afraid of what the Church will say if they support family planning or reproductive health. This is an unfounded fear. In fact surveys have also shown that religion plays a very small role in the family planning decision of Filipinos. Only 2.3 percent in the 2002 survey of Pulse Asia.

Now, let us take a quick glance at each of the presidential candidate's policy on population to see if it mirrors the will of the people.

President Macapagal-Arroyo's population policy has always been based on responsible parenthood through an informed citizenry. She is for birth spacing as a means of controlling the population. However, she only supports natural family planning which contradicts her statement of an informed citizenry.

FPJ is also for responsible parenthood. He believes that the number of children one must have should depend on how well they can afford to support them. Like Ms Macapagal, he favors the promotion of natural family planning.

Raul Roco, on the other hand, has said that he is supportive of population management that is guided by the principle of sustainable development.

Bro. Eddie Villanueva has declared that he is for freedom of choice. He supports natural family planning as well as modern artificial family planning methods.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson said that his administration is determined to embark on a population management program through the procurement and distribution of contraceptives such as condoms and birth control pills. His administration will also campaign for a two-child scheme for newlyweds to help curb our growing population.

Whenever the presidential candidates are asked about family planning, I wish that they would talk about the country's commitment to the International Conference on Population and Development. And that commitment is for universal access to reproductive health services particularly family planning and adolescent reproductive health.

Commitment to these rights and gender-based services would contribute to:

- Achievement of desired population growth and distribution.
- Ensuring environmental sustainability.
- Promotion of gender equity.
- Reduction of infant and maternal mortality.
- Reduction of poverty and inequalities in human development opportunities.

What should be done is to ensure that couples are fully informed of all the methods of contraception and that when they demand it, the government is obligated to provide the service. It is their right and the government must uphold this right. In the context of the above statements, it seems that only Lacson has a concrete program on population.

However, I strongly recommend that whoever wins this election look at the scientific facts presented to them. If that is not enough, I urge them to look at the realities of the communities living on the riverbanks near Malacañang and then appoint a population and development czar with a Cabinet rank to oversee the implementation of a strong population and development program.

ILLUSTRATION BY ANTHONY MISTADES
PAGE DESIGN BY ERNIE SAMBO

Review trade commitments to the WTO

By Wigberto E. Tañada
Lead convenor
Fair Trade Alliance

In tackling the deep-seated problems of mass poverty and unemployment in the country, the next administration must revisit the terms of Philippine incorporation in the globalizing world economy. In the early 1960s, we were among Asia's industrializing leaders and were ahead of the East Asian tigers such as South Korea and Taiwan.

Today, after three decades of going "outward-looking" by implementing a narrow and unilateral trade liberalization program, we are among Asia's industrial laggards, in the company of Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. In the process, we have also managed to chalk up P6 trillion in total national debt that is more than equal our gross domestic product, thus making the Philippines a prime candidate to become the next Argentina.

We, at the Fair Trade Alliance, are heartened that all the presidential candidates have listed in their reform agenda the need to manage the debt problem better through prudent government spending and the need to work for a more level playing field for our local industry and agriculture.

However, we are disappointed that they have not announced any bold reform measures to save and strengthen local industry and agriculture. Most of our industries are either declining or collapsing due to the one-sided liberalization commitments made by our government to the multilateral financial institutions and to the regional and international trade bodies, the widespread smuggling of foreign industrial and agricultural goods, the high cost of doing business in the country and the glaring absence of a national industrial and agricultural development program.

Smuggling

A reform-minded government must be able to undertake a review of our trade liberalization commitments to the WTO, IMF-WB group, Afta and Apec; come up with a unified interagency campaign against smuggling, which is most unfair to local industry and agriculture as smugglers pay no taxes at all; and, above all, launch a national mobilization program to develop and strengthen our local industrial and agricultural capacity, including a domestic investment promotion program.

On the fiscal front, proposals to reduce government expenditures, curb corruption and improve tax collection are fine but certainly not enough. The government should be able to address at least two major root causes of the fiscal crisis—the shrinking domestic industrial and agricultural sectors and the huge debt servicing burden, which eats up nearly half of the national budget.

Unless the government is able to revitalize the domestic industrial and agricultural sectors, its ability to raise needed taxes will always be limited. Expanding the capacity of these sectors to pay taxes will depend on their capacity to grow under a new and more enlightened industrial and agricultural policy.

Stagnation

What the new administration should undertake after winning the vote is a fresh review of the government's borrowing, trade and agro-industrial policies, all of which are interrelated. Why is the Philippines poorer and more heavily indebted after three decades of borrowing to finance our development needs? Instead of becoming globally competitive, why have our industrial and agricultural sectors stagnated under the so-called efficiency-raising program of liberalization and deregulation?

In contrast, why are the economies of countries which have not borrowed from the IMF-WB group such as China or those which have paid their loans in advance such as Thailand and India surging? Is it coincidental that these countries happen to have tariff rates twice or thrice higher than ours, that they have been opening up their economies under globalization in a more calibrated manner, and that they have been deliberately building up their domestic as well as export industry to promote growth and job creation?

The campaign of the presidential candidates will be meaningful and educational if they can give us a clearer road map on how the Philippines shall develop under globalization

Please detail position on agriculture

By Ernesto M. Ordoñez
National coordinator
Alyansa Agrikultura

Because of space limitations in Talk of the Town, the candidates did not go beyond general statements on agriculture.

It is said that "the devil is in the detail." It is this "detail" that the Alyansa Agrikultura wants to know about. The Alyansa is the largest coalition of farmers and fisherfolk today, composed of 37 federations and organizations nationwide.

All the five candidates said that we should participate in globalization. But, in doing so, we should not sacrifice our people's welfare. The Alyansa agrees with this position. But there is not enough "detail" to differentiate how each candidate will translate this general position into a tariff reduction program.

Anticipating the problem of motherhood statements, the Alyansa identified the "detail" they wanted in a proposed presidential agriculture agenda. This was done through nationwide consultations for over a year. It was sent to the presidential candidates last month.

In the globalization area, two such "detailed" positions were proposed: 1.) "where allowed, freeze or increase agriculture tariffs where there is no level playing field because of foreign subsidies, as well as adjust tariffs and appropriate bound rates in the next WTO round to achieve fair trade;" and 2.) for our 3.2 million rice farmers, "maintain quantitative restrictions for rice beyond 2005 until the necessary support structures are in place."

So far, only candidate Raul Roco has given his commitment to these two positions through public statements and formal communications. The Alyansa will wait two more weeks for the other candidates' positions. It will then inform the farmers and fisherfolk of their positions to guide their voting decisions.

Other Alyansa positions that are part of a summarized two-page proposed presidential agriculture agenda are the following:

- Give priority to the three million small fishers for municipal waters to combat poverty and achieve environmental balance, and restore Department of Agriculture Order No. 17, which delimits and defines these municipal waters.
- Ensure the speedy allocation of all coco levy funds to the 3.7 million coconut farmers and farm workers through a transparent mechanism.
- Fast track the agrarian reform program with the necessary agricultural support services and women's property right guarantees so that the farmer will be better rather than worse off.
- Prosecute and jail smugglers and stop the importation of agricultural goods with bio-security risks.

Some candidates, because of their financial backers, may not commit to helping in the allocation of the coco levy to the coconut farmers. The 3.7 million coconut farmers should be informed of this, and consequently withdraw their votes from these candidates.

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NPA raids cop station, Army camp; 7 wounded

By Joey A. Gabieta
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—Two civilians, four police officers and a soldier were wounded yesterday when members of the New People's Army conducted simultaneous raids on a police station and an Army detachment in San Jose de Buan town, Samar.

Marife Ducil, 20, and Ronnie Lozada, 30, residents of the town, were wounded after they were hit by stray bullets during the exchange of gunfire between the communist guerrillas and the personnel of the San Jose de Buan police located at the town proper.

Military reports said that Ducil and Lozada were outside their homes when at least 60 NPA rebels attacked the San Jose de Buan police station at about 4:05 a.m.

At the same time, another group of guerrillas raided the detachment of the 34th Infantry Battalion Alpha Coy, less than a kilometer away from the police station.

Although heavily outnumbered, Insp. Ranulfo Geromilla, 53, and his five men, who were on duty at that time, stood their ground and fought their attackers.

After a three-hour firefight, Geromilla and his three officers were wounded. They were Police Officers 1 Aris Advincula, 26; Noel Capales, 32; and Artemio Rebato, 30.

The two other policemen were PO1 Elmer Cabrigas and PO1 Julius Bartolome.

The four wounded policemen were airlifted at about 10 a.m. to the Remedios Trinidad Romualdez Hospital in Tacloban City, about 133 km northeast of San Jose de Buan.

They suffered bullet wounds in different parts of their bodies. But the attending doctors had declared their condition as stable.

Capales said that when they heard successive bursts of gunfire, they immediately took their service firearms and positioned themselves inside the station.

"We we're outnumbered. But we tried to fight back," he told the INQUIRER in the hospital.

The exchange of gunfire lasted almost three hours—from 4:05 a.m. to 7 a.m.

According to Capales, some NPA members were able to enter the police station and took with them three M-14 and two M-16 rifles.

But he said they also managed to hit an undetermined number of rebels, as indicated in the bloodstains at the area where the attackers had positioned.

An Army soldier was wounded when another group of rebels attacked the 34th IB detachment, about the same time San Jose de Buan was being raided.

Major Gen. Glenn Rabonza, commanding general of the 8th Infantry Division based in Catbalogan Samar, did not name the wounded soldier.

But he said the rebels failed to overrun the detachment, as the Army soldiers led by Lt. Freddie Calusing fought back.

The firefight lasted for almost an hour after which the NPA guerrillas left.

But Rabonza said he immediately dispatched a reinforcement team, including a military helicopter, to pursue the NPA members.

The main camp of the battalion is located in San Jorge town, also in Samar, and is under the command of Col. Romeo Gapuz.

Overrun

In Misamis Occidental, military officials said government troops on Tuesday overran a highly fortified NPA camp after more than two hours of fierce gun battle that left one rebel dead and several others injured.

Col. Roland Rodriguez, deputy chief of the Army's 1st Infantry Division, said soldiers belonging to the 10th Infantry Battalion stumbled on a group of rebels encamped in Barangay Upper Bautista in Calamba town.

"It took more than two hours of fierce gun battle before our soldiers managed to overrun the camp," he said.

The rebels, led by Robertson Anches alias Commander Stanley, secretary of the NPA's Sendong Guerrilla Front of the Western Mindanao Regional Party Committee "tried to stand their ground but eventually fled," he said.

No soldier was harmed during the clash, he added.

The rebels took with them their wounded comrades but left the slain male rebel, whose identity was still being established.

Rodriguez said the camp has several bunkers, classrooms, running trenches and training ground.

"It could accommodate more than 100 people," he said.

Tuesday's clash in Calamba was the second in the province this week.

On Sunday, a woman rebel was killed during a firefight in a hinterland of Sapang Dalaga town.

Insp. Benjamin Pelenio, Sapang Dalaga town police chief, said the clash took place as troops belonging to the 10th Infantry Battalion chanced upon some 80 guerrillas.

Pelenio said the gunfight lasted for about 15 minutes, leaving in its wake the dead rebel, who has not been identified by authorities.

The site of the encounter, which took place two days after rebels burned a passenger bus in Tangub City, is located around 20 km from the town center.

Earlier, the National Democratic Front said the NPA would intensify attacks against government troops and officials.

But the military said the rebels have instead targeted civilians, such as in the case of the bus burning incident.

Major Gen. Samuel Bagasin, commander of the Army's 4th Infantry Division based in Cagayan de Oro City, said the threat was the communists' way of projecting it is still a force to reckon with. *With reports from Hernan P. dela Cruz, Ryan D. Rosauro, Anthony S. Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

LT. RONALDO Fedelino, immediately after being accosted by NPA fighters in Camarines Sur last month.

NPAs release captured gov't soldiers' photos

NEW PEOPLE'S Army rebels in Bicol under the Romulo Jallores Command have released photos of the two government soldiers who, they claimed, they are holding as "prisoners of war."

The military has rejected the POW tag on the captured soldiers, preferring that they be called instead as "missing in action."

"With the release of these (photos), the NPA-Romulo Jallores Command assures the families and loved ones of the POWs as well as the general public that POWs Lt. Ronaldo Fedelino and Pfc. Ronel Lemeno are treated with leniency, respect of their human rights and concern for their safety and well-being amidst relentless massive military operations and wanton human abuses by the Armed Forces of the Philippines in several towns and barrios of Camarines Sur," the Party Information Bureau said in a statement yesterday.

One of the photos shows Fedelino with two NPA guerrillas after his capture.

Other photos show the two prisoners partaking food with their custodians, and an NPA paramedic getting Fedelino's blood pressure.

The rebels said the soldiers had surrendered in a battle with the NPA on March 1 in Barangay Bataan, Tinambac, Camarines Sur.

"They are being kept in good condition under NPA custody while terms for their release have yet to be negotiated with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines upon the initiative of the Philippine government," the statement said.

The Communist Party of the Philippines and the NPA have called on the government to order the immediate cessation of military operations in Camarines Sur and surrounding areas to ensure the safety of the POWS and pave the way for negotiations for their safe and orderly release.

The NPA said that in adherence to the Geneva Convention, the prisoners will be released and repatriated upon the cessation of active hostilities in Bicol.

But Maj. Gen. Alfonso Dagudag, the chief of the Army's Southern Luzon Unified Command dismissed the NPA's invitation to start negotiations for the prisoner's safe release. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

ROUNDUP

Suspected drug pusher nabbed

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—The Kiamba town police arrested a suspected drug pusher from Cotabato City during a buy-bust operation March 9. Supt. Willie Dangane, Sarangani police director, identified the suspect as Isa Musi Buyos, 38. Buyos was arrested inside his safehouse in Kiamba after he handed over a sachet of suspected shabu to an agent. Dangane said the police also arrested two minors, who were then buying drugs from the suspect. The raiding team seized at least 10 grams of methamphetamine hydrochloride worth about P50,000 from Buyos. *Aquiles Z. Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Lanao council bet abducted

ZAMBOANGA CITY—A Sangguniang Bayan candidate in Lanao del Sur was abducted on Wednesday, the military reported on Saturday. Southern Command chief Lt. Gen. Roy Kyamko Hadji Rasul Mamalupun of Bubong town was kidnapped while on his way home after an early morning prayer at a mosque near his home. Kyamko said the main suspect in the candidate's disappearance was a local kidnap group headed by an Ibrahim Solaiman. Kyamko said the military suspects the incident was election-related.
Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Doctor joins Butuan foundation

THE BUTUAN City Charities Foundation has a new director in its board: Dr. Casimero S. Garcia, who recently retired from his private medical practice in Atlanta, Georgia, according to a news release. Garcia is known for his charitable work, especially among the needy folk of Butuan. He sends medicine, medical supplies and equipment to different medical institutions in Butuan to benefit poor patients. He also organized a successful medical mission of physicians from Atlanta and provided funds for the construction of artesian wells that now benefit 14 barangays.

'Illegal dismissal' of barangay head

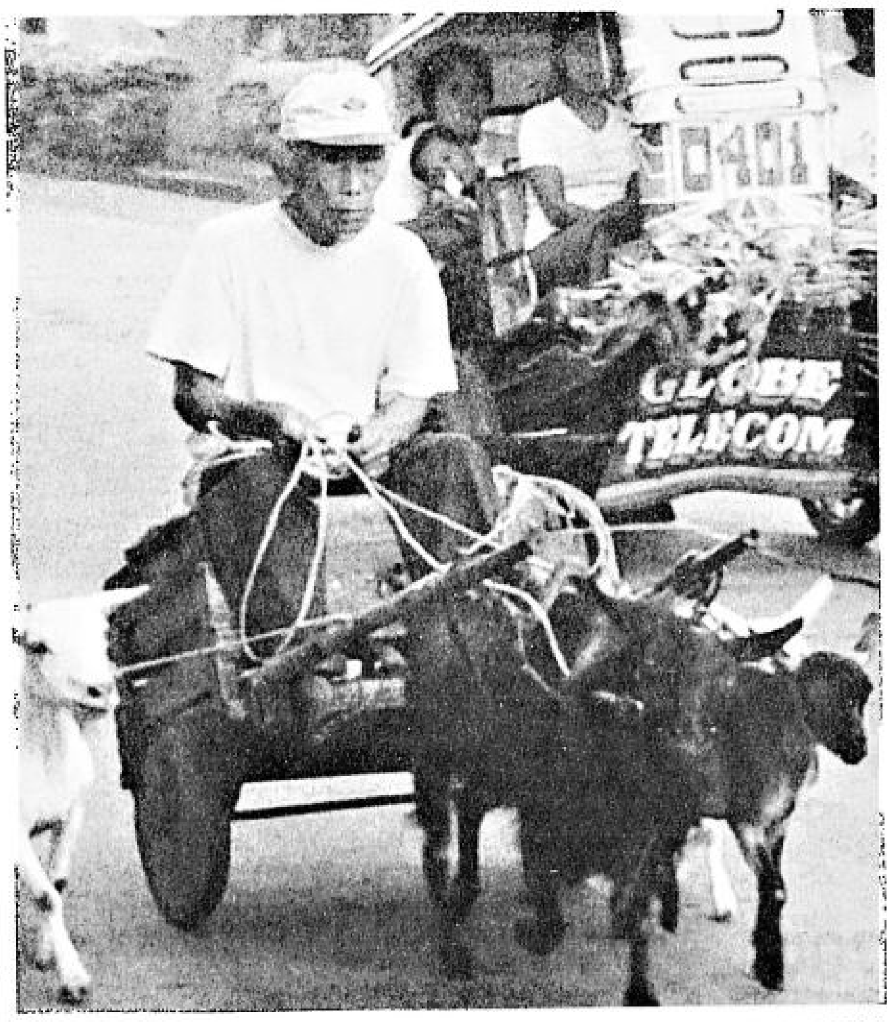
KALIBO, Aklan—Provincial elections officer Dennis Agusan, described as illegal the ouster of Joel Gelito as barangay chair of Manoc-manoc on Boracay Island. Agusan said the dismissal by the Malay town council of Gelito violated elections law as public officials could only be suspended or dismissed during the election period for offenses involving graft of corruption. The town council of Malay, which has jurisdiction over Boracay, ordered Gelito dismissed last week for abuse of authority for allegedly violating the local building code when he constructed a structure without a permit from the municipality. *Recto I. Vidal, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Jaworski promises projects for Negros

DUMAGUETE CITY—Political pledges are not as good as cash anymore, as Sen. Robert Jaworski found out in a visit here last month. Jaworski had to say "I'm sorry" and promised to pour projects into Negros Oriental in a bid to make up for Gov. George Arnaiz' displeasure. Arnaiz made it clear to the reelectionist senator that he could not get his support because he was spurned at least three times that he went to the senator's office to get some help for projects in Negros Oriental. Jaworski apologized, saying he didn't know of the governor's sentiments earlier.
Alex V. Pal, PDI Visayas Bureau

DOJ dismisses kidnapping charges

ILOILO CITY—The Department of Justice has declared as a "freak accident" the 2002 shootout between the National Bureau of Investigation agents and Capiz businessman Dindo Salazar that killed Salazar and two others. This was the basis for the DOJ's decision to dismiss the kidnapping and robbery complaint filed by the NBI against the Salazar family and the murder and attempted murder complaints filed by Salazar's family against NBI agents and physician Madeline Erada. The incident was a "simple collection of debt" that turned bloody, the DOJ said. Salazar, Erada's sister Perla Erada-Pasoquin, who accompanied the NBI in the supposed rescue operation, and Pfc. Jeneth Bacanto of the Army's Task Force Panay were killed in the May 2002 shootout. *Nestor Burgos Jr., PDI Visayas Bureau*



NO KIDDING RYAN D. ROSAURO/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

It's a nice afternoon ride for Gabriel Saren, 70, of Poblacion, Oroquieta City, with his mini-cart that he uses to take his goats to a seaside greenery for graze. Saren, a former driver of a horse-drawn coach, said it took him at least three months to train the goats for the horse's job.

SC affirms death sentence for kidnap

BAGUIO CITY—Saying that alibi is a weak defense, the Supreme Court on Tuesday affirmed the conviction of two men charged with kidnapping for ransom and another with robbery with rape.

But the high court gave the accused different sentences—the kidnappers will face death while the rapist will spend life behind bars for 30 years.

The SC justices, who are holding their summer session here, ruled on the two cases en banc.

The court affirmed the death sentence imposed by the Parañaque Regional Trial Court on Angelito Martinez and Dexter Tagle who, together with five others, were charged with abducting lawyer Aquiles Lopez on Aug. 4, 1996 along Quirino Avenue in Parañaque.

Presenting themselves as narcotics agents wearing military uniforms, the accused intercepted Lopez's black Honda Accord and later handcuffed and blindfolded him.

They demanded P10 million in ransom but reduced this to P2 million.

Members of the defunct Presidential Anti-Crime Commission's Task Force Habagat rescued Lopez and arrested Martinez, co-accused Rosita Yu and Genaro de Jesus.

Tagle and another suspect, Rigor Aguilar, later surrendered to deny the charges.

With Aguilar turning as state witness, Judge Zosimo Escano on Dec. 7, 1998 sentenced Tagle and Martinez to death and ordered them to pay moral damages of P1 million each.

On appeal to the high court, Tagle said he was home helping his mother prepare for his father's death anniversary.

Martinez, meanwhile, said he was then at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport fetching someone. But the high court, in its 24-page decision, dismissed the alibi. *Delmar Carino, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

German accused of rape commits suicide

PUERTO GALERA, Occidental Mindoro—A German national who is facing rape charges filed by four children here committed suicide last Sunday evening, according to Chief Insp. Policarpio C. Lopez, Puerto Galera police chief.

Lopez identified the victim as Rainer Utz Fahrenhorst, 61, single and temporarily residing in Barangay San Isidro, Puerto Galera.

The suicide happened inside Fahrenhorst's rented house at about 11:30 p.m., according to caretaker Leovigildo Galicia's report to the police.

Galicia is a resident of White Beach, a tourist destination in Barangay San Isidro.

He said Fahrenhorst took more than ten tablets of his medicine Rohypnol 1, after which he told his caretaker that he was ending his life and that his body had to be burned. Galicia rushed the German on a jeep to the hospital but the foreigner died beforehand.

Fahrenhorst was facing criminal charges of rape and violation of RA 7610 filed by four children aged 8 to 12 before Regional Trial Court Branch 40 in Calapan.

Puerto Galera folk believed that other children could have also been victims of Fahrenhorst but would not step forward for fear or shame.

Some people wonder why Fahrenhorst was able to post a bail of P200,000 when the case involved is heinous in nature. According to RTC Branch 40 Judge Tomas Leynes, while the charge is rape, it is not a capital offense because there was no sexual intercourse.

He added that he considered the prosecutor's recommendation of the bail after Fahrenhorst's lawyer filed a motion to fix bail.

Eleven charges were pending against the German and his American friend who is now in jail and cannot bail himself out.

Fahrenhorst's body was to be brought to the funeral parlor for embalming per advice of Uwe Berndt of the German Embassy.

An American national, who is also charged with rape of children in Puerto Galera, is currently detained at the provincial jail. *Madonna T. Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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INQUIRER Southern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Floreño G. Solmirano

'Rondalla' fest plucks strings of unity

By Juan Escandor Jr. and Alan Pelayo
Naga City

FOR FIVE days last month, 17 groups from Spain, Mexico, Russia, United States, Australia, Israel and the Philippines treated Bicolanos to *rondalla* music that organizers said celebrated a "shared heritage" with the rest of the world.

Dubbed "*Cuerdas de Unidad* (Strings of Unity)" or the "*Cuerdas nin Kagabsan*" in Bicolano, the first ever multinational *rondalla* festival held in Naga City on Feb 10-14 aimed to promote the musical tradition, interpreted in diverse cultural orientations of the participating nations.

It also hoped to establish linkages to promote cooperation and exchange for the continuous development of this musical tradition.

Evolution and innovation

For the first time, the evolution and innovation of *rondalla* in different cultures around the world were offered to the public.

From folk to rock, classical to experimental, the 17 ensembles interpreted scores and pieces in varied cultural expressions reflective of their diverse nationalities.

Musicians, aged 9 to 71 years old, participated in the festival.

Andres Garcia, a member of the La Rondalla Motivos, explained in Spanish that they came all the way from Mexico to show that *rondalla* music transcended national boundaries.

The warm reception they received in Naga, he said, inspired them to do their best to contribute to the appreciation of the *rondalla* in the mainstream performing arts.

Symbol

"Through the music, we came together to unite our sentiments in the form of art expression using the rondalla as a symbol of unity," Garcia added.

Of the participating nations, the Philippines has 11 ensembles, namely, the Candelaria Community Rondalla, Celso Espejo Rondalla, Davao City National High School Rondalla, Kabataang Rondalla Silay Ensemble, Handuwaran, Andres Bonifacio Alumni Rondalla, Kwerdas, Naga Central School Rondalla, Philippine Normal University Rondalla, University of Santo Tomas Rondalla, and the University of the Philippines Rondalla.

The rest have one ensemble each, like the Duet Phoenix of Russia, Three Plucked Strings of Israel, and Tuna Femenina of Spain. Those from the US and Australia were represented by Filipino expatriates, the Iskwelahang Pilipino Rondalla and the Rondanihan.

THIS photo of young "rondalla" musicians known as the "Estudiantinas of Nueva Caceres" (now Naga City) was taken in the early 1900s on the old cathedral grounds.

PHOTO COURTESY OF FABIANA AREJOLA/MUSEO CONCILLAR DEL SEMINARIO DE NUEVA CACERES

Music's finest

Ramon P. Santos, commissioner of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, said the choice of Bicol as festival venue hardly met resistance among the organizers. The region has produced some of the finest musical artists of the land, he said.

It was in Naga where the *rondalla* tradition in the country had flourished before it diffused in other parts of the world, Santos revealed. The city also has something to show in terms of its rich historical and religious landmarks and heritage, and its idyllic scenery that enthrall first-time visitors and tourists, he added.

Aside from the local government's desire to underscore the city's emerging role as venue of major national and regional events, the enthusiasm of members of the Development Institute of Bicolano Artists had made the selection of Naga as host and co-presentor of the *rondalla* festival feasible, said Jose B. Perez, director of the Naga City Visitors Center.

Origins

The origin of the *rondalla* has several versions, according to Hilarion F. Rubio, in his book "The Roving Rondalla from the Filipino Heritage: The Making of a Nation."

One says a group of young men went around regularly to play and sing in front of houses. Another says it was a group of street musicians, called the *murza* or *murga*, begging for alms. Similar groups were also found in Spain and Mexico.

In another version, it was a musicians' group, called the *comparza*, playing on stage, while still another says it was a typical music group popular among universities in Spain as the *estudiantina* (*tina* or *tuna* for short). Members played mandolins, violins, guitars, flutes, cellos, basses, tambourines, castanets and triangles. The students donned pirate costumes.

Nueva Caceres

Perez said the *rondalla* in Naga, then known as Nueva Caceres, flourished among students of the Seminario Conciliar de Nueva Caceres (now the Holy Rosary Minor Seminary) who were called the Estudiantinas.

They traditionally plucked their instruments during the Holy Week as part of the Lenten rites and other religious celebrations.

Instruments

Historians traced the *rondalla*'s beginnings in the Philippines to the 16th century when the Spanish colonizers introduced it.

The *rondalla* is an ensemble composed largely of the *bandurria* and other stringed musical instruments classified in the cittern family—including lutes, banjos, *octavina* and laud.

The *bandurria*, the main string instrument, is a pear-shaped, short-necked lute popular in southern Spain. In the Philippines and Spain, it is a 14-string to 30-string instrument plucked fast with a pick. A 30-member ensemble has at least 16 *bandurrias*.

'Rondalla' ensemble

Other instruments common in a *rondalla* ensemble are guitars, banjos, octavina or a big guitar-like instrument that carries the bass, drums and other percussion instruments.

In the 1960s, the *rondalla* made its mark among Filipino communities in California, New York and Hawaii in the United States as an expression of cultural identity.

Later, Filipino-Americans started establishing *rondalla* schools at the University of California in Los Angeles, University of Michigan, University of Hawaii and the National University of Singapore.

According to Verne de la Peña, festival project director, the schools began attracting students of other nationalities and cultural roots.

Patrimony

Santos said the *rondalla*'s musical tradition has assumed its own expressive character and has branched into greater plurality than before, enhancing "new cultural habitats." The *rondalla* is "a patrimony that is shared by other cultures and civilizations," he said.

Since it was introduced in the early Spanish era, the *rondalla* has evolved its distinctly Filipino character. It has been around in the Mediterranean region, Middle East, western and eastern Europe, northern Africa and other parts of Asia.

In launching the festival, the NCCA and the Developmental Institute of Bicol Artists hoped to bring the *rondalla* to the mainstream of performing arts.

When the Cuerdas de Unidad pulled its curtains down on Feb. 14, the organizers were certain that cultural exchange and harmony had been achieved among the participants.

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Erap lawyers petition . . .

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rest house would be a form of "house ar- rest," lawyer Noel Malaya answered in the negative.

"That is why he is offering to relinquish control over the (estate.) But he can still make some improvements in the property," Malaya said.

Aside from Malaya, other de oficio counsels who signed the motion were Manuel Pamaran, Jose Flaminiano and Irene Jurado.

The lawyers said that "while in his Tanay property, the court and the Philippine National Police can take control and supervision of the entire premises in the same manner as any detention area."

They said Estrada could "readily give his consent" to such an arrangement because part of his property had been used since the 1970s as a camping ground for the ROTC cadets, Boy Scouts and even the military."

"In fact, a military barracks still exist in the compound as a result of the past accommodation to the military. This arrangement can save the government expenses as accused will shoulder the expenses of his detention in his property," they said.

The lawyers said transferring Estrada from Camp Capinpin to his rest house would be in keeping with the desire of Malacañang, former President Corazon Aquino, religious, business and civic groups as well as political leaders to give Estrada "humane" treatment.

"Nothing in our laws prohibits the move; in a democracy, what is not prohibited is allowed," they said.

Compassion

Malacañang is now singing a different tune on Estrada's plea to be allowed to visit his mother. Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said Estrada could do so if allowed by the Sandiganbayan.

"This is something that's totally within the jurisdiction of the Sandiganbayan and the Sandiganbayan will respond accordingly if they (Estrada lawyers) file a manifestation making such request," Bunye said at a briefing yesteday.

He reiterated that Ms Macapagal was pursuing a policy of compassion and humane treatment for her ousted predecessor.

"That policy remains provided everything is within the law. And by saying within the law, we're saying that this has to be approved by the Sandiganbayan," Bunye said when asked if the President would allow Estrada to visit his 98-year-old mother.

City arrest

Estrada's lawyers pointed out that former Indonesian President Suharto, who is also facing graft charges, was enjoying "city arrest."

The lawyers said the same treatment should be given to Estrada. "Presidents or top leaders are treated as a class by themselves, who are either put on 'house arrest' or allowed to go on exile," they said.

They assured that Estrada was not likely to escape while in detention in his rest house.

If the anti-graft court allowed him to go abroad "where the possibility of flight is higher," then it "cannot begrudge him the amenity of staying in his property, which happens to be just across (from) Camp Capinpin," the lawyers said.

Golf cart

They noted that Estrada, who turns 67 next month, had been given a golf cart by Ms Macapagal "even if he does not play golf and is in a place where there is no golf course."

Such gesture shows that Malacañang recognizes the fact that Estrada is in pain, "which disables him from standing and walking for long periods," according to his lawyers.

Estrada would have gone to the United States for knee surgery had he obtained a visa from the US Embassy.

"He cannot escape even if he wants to, and he does not want to. He is too prominent, too recognizable, too unwell, and too committed to affirm and establish his innocence to think of flight," Estrada's lawyers said.

Government prosecutors are asking for his return to the Veterans Memorial Medical Center in Quezon City, where he was previously detained, so he can obtain better care for his knees. *With a report from Juliet Labog-Javellana*

Finance chief to probe . . .

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Amatong said she would order an inquiry into the circumstances behind the inclusion of OSS Executive Director Ernesto Hiansen, who earlier blew the whistle on the anomalous sale of spurious tax credit certificates, in the scam. "I'll go into the bottom of it," she said.

The National Bureau of Investigation earlier filed charges against Hiansen and other OSS personnel for their alleged failure to stop the transfer of the fake TCCs.

"There is a machine that determines whether a TCC is fake or not," said Amatong, casting doubts on Hiansen's statement that he signed the fake TCCs in good faith, not knowing they were fraudulent.

Whistle-blower

The OSS is responsible for issuing tax credit certificates.

Amatong, however, credited Hiansen for taking the lead in the investigation and for exposing the tax scam. "In fairness to Hiansen, it is true that he was really the one who blew the whistle because he reported it," she said.

The scam involved the sale last year of P24 million worth of fake TCCs in the name Rohm Electronics to Nissan Motors Corp. and Splash Manufacturing Corp. which later used the spurious TCCs to pay their tax obligations.

Amatong has ordered the OSS to turn over all records in its possession to the Office of the Ombudsman for safekeeping. These include documents that are vital to the prosecution of several tax credit fraud cases earlier filed by the government.

Records to Ombudsman

The finance secretary said Hiansen should not be bothered by the charges filed against him if he was confident he was not part of the scam.

Hiansen earlier branded as unfair the decision of the NBI to implicate him and his staff from the OSS in the tax credit scam, saying they were the ones who exposed the anomaly and helped the police in pursuing the case.

Hiansen had sought the transfer of all OSS records, including evidences for cases of fraudulent use of tax credits, to the Office of the Ombudsman.

"We have requested for the transfer of the records to the Ombudsman to make sure they are intact," Hiansen said in a recent meeting with a group of tax credit claimants.

He said the turnover of the documents was also necessary to dispel allegations that the OSS was destroying evidence.

Aside from the P24-million tax scam, Hiansen has witnessed several cases of tax credit fraud, including the P5.3-billion tax credit scam involving the Chingkoe group of companies.

Exporters yesterday threw their support behind Hiansen whom they said offered better service to the public when he assumed the top OSS post. They likewise called for an inquiry why he was implicated in the scam.

"We, as exporters, are now very disillusioned. Something is very wrong somewhere, and we will do our part to find out. Hiansen was the one who cleaned the mess at the OSS, and now he is the one being held accountable for the scam," said Confederation of Garments Exporters of the Philippines chair Donald Dee.

Sergio Ortiz-Luis, president of Philippine Exporters Confederation, said exporters were surprised and at the same time saddened by the news that Hiansen was being implicated in the tax scam.

Confidence

"We have a very high confidence in him. That is why we are wondering why he is being implicated in the case. He has always been very transparent to us since the very beginning," said Ortiz-Luis.

Ortiz-Luis said Hiansen had disclosed the scam immediately to the exporters after it was discovered by the OSS.

"He admitted to us that the fake TCCs were able to escape notice of the OSS because he still did not know the modus operandi of the syndicates. But the OSS helped expose it after making investigations," said Ortiz-Luis.

Ortiz-Luis, expressed concern about the adverse effect of the controversy to the tax credit system of the country.

He said the scam had affected the credibility of the tax credit system and put at risk the confidence of foreign investors in the government.

PNP fears bloody May elections

From page A1

lilio in Quezon, Naujan in Mindoro Oriental, Gigmoto in Catanduanes, Gubat in Sorsogon, Tagbilaran in Bohol, and Parang in Maguindanao.

According to Razon, a municipality or an area is considered an election "area of immediate concern" if it has a high presence of communist New People's Army (NPA) rebels, a history of election-related violence and intense political rivalry.

A town or barangay is considered an "area of concern" if any one of the three conditions is present.

The top six regions with the most number of election areas of concern are the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) with 55; Region 5 with 52; Region 4-A with 40; Region 8 with 39; Region 3 with 39 and Region 12 with 37.

JOAN BONDOC

A REVIEW of the status of government preparedness for the May elections is conducted at Camp Aguinaldo by the top guns. From left, Defense Undersecretary Edgardo Batenga, Comelec Commissioner Rex Borra, Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita, AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Narciso Abaya and PNP Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr.

Private armies

Adding to the PNP's anxieties are the 125 private armies believed to be in the pay of local warlords.

In 2001, there were 114 private armed groups, Razon said, but the PNP later dismantled 80 of them, reducing the number to 34.

Most of the existing groups (81) are believed to have been illegally providing security for political clans in the ARMM. Eastern Visayas has 10 while Calabarzon and Central Luzon has nine and eight, respectively.

So far, police have seized 890 loose firearms as part of the election gun ban.

The NPA, which has stepped up attacks in the countryside in recent weeks, has also spawned fears of more violence in the weeks ahead.

P5-M collection

Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Narciso Abaya said the NPA had managed to collect some P5 million in permit-to-campaign fees since February in areas all over the country.

This represents 38 percent of their total collection in 2000 of P12.8 million, he said.

Most of the fees the NPA collected came from areas under their control in Regions 4 and 5.

As part of efforts to curb political violence, Commissioner Resurreccion Borra of the Commission on Elections said the Comelec was studying the possibility of transferring ballot boxes from a critical area to a safer place in case violence breaks out in a locality during the counting of the votes.

"In fact, our field people would be preparing for that in some areas which are tagged as election areas of immediate concern," Borra said.

"But again for purposes of transparency among all candidates and politicians and their followers, they should be consulted. Generally, the watchers should sign something to the effect that there will be a transfer to a safer place so that there will be no more questions later."

ROTC cadets to keep the peace

Borra also said that, as in previous elections, Comelec would tap reservists and ROTC cadets to help keep the peace during the voting and counting.

He said reservists were tapped during the last elections in the National Capital Region.

"But this time, in our discussion, we would like to expand this up to the other areas of the country where there are reservists to be enlisted so that they can be utilized as watchers and observers," Borra said.

"They will monitor the situation and coordinate with law enforcement agencies so that we can be effective in the pursuit of holding of clean, honest, orderly, peaceful and credible elections."

Recently, the military accused three reservist officers of recruiting others to join protests action against the Macapagal administration in case opposition candidate Fernando Poe Jr. was disqualified by the Supreme Court, a charge the three officers have denied.

The court later upheld Poe as a natural-born Filipino fit to run for president.

Alarmed over the rising violence during the campaign period, President Macapagal-Arroyo recently ordered the police and military to monitor present and potential election hot spots. *With a report from Alcuin Papa*

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Then there were 2–Roco, Villanueva

From page A1

refused to join. Disappointed organizers said they would still push through with the affair. Focused on population and poverty, the debate would be aired live over cable ABS-CBN News Channel from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

The INQUIRER and GMA 7 are planning a debate on March 29, while the Commission on Elections and the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV) are planning theirs on April 13.

Three empty chairs

Only Roco and Villanueva are sure of taking part in the debate scheduled for April 13. They would face three empty chairs representing the absent presidential aspirants.

Despite this, PPCRV founding chair Henrietta de Villa said that "hope springs eternal." She gave Ms Macapagal, Poe and Lacson until a week before April 13 to make up their minds.

"I regret again to inform the body that as of today, Mr. Fernando Poe Jr. is still not inclined to participate in the debate. Thank you," Rod Reyes, head of Poe's media bureau, said during the meeting at the Comelec.

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said Ms Macapagal had declined an invitation to participate in a March 22 debate being organized by Pulse Asia and two other organizations.

Bunye said that Ms Macapagal did not want to be bound by the PPCRV memorandum of understanding "unless we hear very clear indication from Mr. Fernando Poe that he is also participating."

"What we can do is maybe sign this but it is very clear that we are signing ... just to confirm that these are the guidelines we agreed on," Bunye said, adding that they will confirm Ms Macapagal's attendance a week before the debate.

Roco's representative, Dr. Jaime Galvez-Tan, confirmed his principal's intent to join. Lacson's lawyer said he was instructed to say that the senator would attend only if Ms Macapagal was around.

"The candidacy of Eduardo Villanueva is not hinged on any debate," Villanueva's lawyer said.

Despite their reservations, all the representatives of the five presidential candidates signed the MOA, which bound them to the debate guidelines.

Comelec Commissioner Resurreccion Borra said he would try to "require" all the other television and radio stations to air the PPCRV-sponsored three-hour debate which would be aired live by Channel 5.

Praise

The March 22 debate organizers assailed the three candidates who backed out, but praised Roco and Villanueva for keeping their word. The organizers were taken aback by Lacson's turnaround, saying that the senator had given a "very firm commitment" to participate.

"I am personally disappointed at these alibis," said Albay Rep. Krisel Lagman-Luistro, who is with the Philippine Legislators Committee on Population and Development (PLCPD).

Luistro said she hoped the public would judge Ms Macapagal, Poe and Lacson by their refusal to be quizzed on their policies. She said most candidates gave mere motherhood statements on population management.

"This is advantageous to (Roco and Villanueva) because the public will be able hear them out," Luistro said.

Arrogant

Junice Melgar of the Reproductive Health Advocacy Network, another debate sponsor, said the organizers wanted to question Ms Macapagal.

"We're disappointed with the President's refusal to join the debate for flimsy and very arrogant reasons," she said.

Garcia said Lacson saw no point in holding a debate without the incumbent. "We're not taking it against Poe (for refusing to join a debate). That's his prerogative as a contender.

"But when an incumbent refuses to be held accountable for her governance, (the debate) becomes an exercise in futility," Garcia said.

Roco's representative, Dr. Juan Antonio Perez, did not take back his principal's commitment to join the debate.

Villanueva's representative, Mila Aguilar, said the evangelist would show up "even if no one else shows up."

"He's not prone to temper tantrums, so he can engage in calm debates," she said.

Poe's representative, Erik Espina, apologized to the organizers. "We prefer direct dialogue with the people rather than through intermediaries," said Espina, who is a newscaster.

Ms Macapagal did not send a representative. But the organizers received Bunye's March 16 letter, saying the President is "being held back by the non-participation of Mr. Fernando Poe in this event."

"The debates are a means to offer the people a choice between the most probable winners and President Macapagal-Arroyo does not wish to address an empty chair," wrote Bunye.

Whimsical

In Tacloban City, Roco assailed Ms Macapagal's decision to snub the March 22 presidential debate. The standard-bearer of the Alyansa ng Pag-asa, the first to call for a televised debate among the candidates, said he was willing to attend any debate with or without Ms Macapagal.

"She doesn't want to talk and go. Just like that? It's whimsical," an upset Roco said when asked about Malacañang's latest announcement that Ms Macapagal was not keen on attending the debate.

Unlike other presidential candidates, Ms Macapagal has a lot to explain, including why the economy worsened under her watch, he said.

Duty to face people

"If you're running, you have a duty to face the people. They pay your salary. Why don't you want to face them and explain what you have done?" Roco said at a briefing at the start of his ticket's three-day campaign sortie in Eastern Visayas.

"I think we should not vote for those who are afraid to face the people."

Roco urged the organizers—Pulse Asia, the Philippine Political Science Association and the PLCPD—not to scrap the debate just because the President was snubbing it.

"We have committed to attend; this should push through," he said. "Otherwise, they will be allowing themselves to be dictated by the whims of a candidate. Is that how we treat the Filipinos?"

Fernando Hicap, chair of the militant fisherfolk group Pamalakaya, echoed Roco's call on the organizers.

Unpresidential

"Its' GMA's loss not yours," he said in a press statement. "The President's alibi is totally unacceptable and grossly unpresidential. We hope the rest of presidential wannabes will not follow her first-rate display of political arrogance."

Hicap urged the organizers to coax Poe into participating in the debate, stressing that it's "a must-see political development" in the run-up to the elections in May.

A FORUM for the representatives of the presidential candidates called Tapatan sa Halalan 2004 is held at the Sulo Hotel on Wednesday. From left, Ermin Garcia for Lacson, Dr. Juan Perez for Roco and Eric Espina for Fernando Poe Jr.

JOAN BONDOC

BOOTS ANSON ROA

AMINA RAŠUL-BERNARDO

2 KNP Senate bets . . .

From page A1

port her [election]."

They said she had blatantly used public funds and resources for her campaign, in violation of the Omnibus Elections Code and the Fair Elections Act.

Roa and Bernardo asked the Supreme Court to order Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo to stop implementing Ms Macapagal's orders; National Treasurer Mina Figueroa to stop releasing expenditures authorized by Ms Macapagal; and the Commission on Audit to refrain from passing on any disbursements she had ordered.

They also asked the tribunal to immediately set the case for oral arguments.

'Pure harassment'

Malacañang dismissed the petition as "pure harassment" and having no legal basis.

"You know, we have a unique situation where we have a President who is a candidate for the first time. This is something that we have to adjust to," Ms Macapagal's spokesperson Ignacio Bunye told reporters at a briefing.

Ms Macapagal will continue to govern even if she is campaigning for a full term, he said.

In her sorties nationwide, the President has said that she was governing more than campaigning, and that she was leaving much of the campaign activities to the administration's K-4 coalition.

"We believe this is pure harassment," Bunye said of the Roa-Bernardo petition. "We expect more suits of this nature from the opposition."

He also said such moves betrayed the opposition's fear of Ms Macapagal's candidacy: "What we know is the President is clearly a front-runner, and I believe they will do whatever they think is needed to stop [her] momentum."

Too much temptation

In a 29-page petition for prohibition and mandamus, Roa and Bernardo said Ms Macapagal should yield her office to Guingona because the Constitution prohibits a sitting president from using government resources to ensure reelection.

Quoting the constitutional provision that states, "No person who has succeeded as president and has served as such for more than four years shall be qualified for election to the same office at any time," they said:

"The ban against reelection is intended to prevent an incumbent president from abusing the vast powers of the presidency and misusing the resources of the country—the people's money—for selfish, partisan and questionable self-aggrandizement. The temptations are too much, especially for one who is obsessed with power."

"If one who is duly elected to the presidency is prohibited, through the ban on reelection, to use the powers of the office and the public funds under his control to extend his tenure, with more reason should one who has merely succeeded to the position [like Ms Macapagal] be deprived in similar or greater fashion of the opportunity to desecrate the sacred nature of national elections," they said.

'Novel theory'

Sen. Edgardo Angara, Poe's principal political backer, described the Roa-Bernardo petition as a "novel theory" that "could be justified."

"Our Constitution contemplated only a one-time president. We never envisioned an incumbent president seeking reelection," he observed.

With the "absence of expressed safeguards against a sitting president using government resources for election purposes," Angara said, clear-cut guidelines on how to curb possible abuses could be established only through jurisprudence.

"Only the Supreme Court can pass judgment on this issue," he said.

Roa and Bernardo said Ms Macapagal had in effect "converted the executive branch of government into one big political party geared toward ensuring her victory" in the May 10 election.

They said Ms Macapagal had shown "no qualms about ensuring her victory at any cost to the nation."

"[She] has shown only a predisposition to anarchy and lawlessness by openly flaunting her violations of the very laws she is sworn to uphold and protect, and by taking undue advantage of her position just to satisfy her compulsion," they said.

Given this, they said, Ms Macapagal should be "barred from continuing to hold office as President while campaigning for election to her own term as president."

Examples

The petitioners cited as example of Ms Macapagal's supposed abuse of government resources the P1.3 billion allegedly spent by the Department of Public Works and Highways for the blue uniforms of street sweepers and the blue street signs that "all proclaim the projects of the candidate-president."

They said the street sweepers' uniforms were marked with the words "Programang pangtrabaho ni Pangulong Gloria (President Gloria's employment program)."

According to Roa and Bernardo:

- Ms Macapagal is using government vehicles, equipment and facilities in her sorties, and engaging in vote-buying by giving away free health insurance from the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office and Philhealth.
- TV ads of the PCSO and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources show her "face and likeness."
- "Full-page" print ads of the DPWH, Department of Agriculture, Government Service Insurance Corp. and Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System show not just her face but also her "achievements," awards and projects.

"You name it: Nothing will be spared for Gloria's victory in the May 10 polls, no matter how sordid and squalid this victory. They do so ever so blithely, and equally just as brazenly and shamelessly, in the name of 'governance,'" the petitioners said.

Counter-affidavit

PCSO Chair Livia "Honeygirl" de Leon said the government ordered P3 billion set aside at the start of this year to "enhance" the agency's Greater Medicare Access (or PCSO GMA) program for indigent families.

De Leon made the disclosure in a counter-affidavit that she filed at the Comelec in response to charges of electioneering and vote-buying earlier filed against her and Philhealth chief Francisco Duque.

According to De Leon, the PCSO GMA program was implemented before 2002 for 539,670 families but was ordered "enhanced" late last year when it was discovered that only a small percentage of the target had been reached.

She said the PCSO, Department of Budget and Management and Philhealth signed a memorandum of agreement on Jan. 21.

In the agreement, she said, the PCSO and DBM agreed to each make available to Philhealth the sum of P1.5 billion each, or a total of P3 billion, to cover the premium contributions of the local government units and the national government for indigent families.

As of yesterday, De Leon said, the PCSO had remitted P208 million to Philhealth.

A group of lawyers has accused De Leon and Duque of vote-buying, intervention as public officers, use of public funds for election campaign, and distribution of prohibited election materials in support of Ms Macapagal's candidacy.

De Leon yesterday said the charges were baseless, unfounded and malicious.

She said the PCSO GMA program was conceptualized and implemented "long before" Ms Macapagal declared her candidacy. *With reports from Juliet Labog-Javellana, Carlito Pablo and Martin P. Marfil*

Tito's first advice to FPJ: Talk longer

From page A1

ident Teofisto "Tito" Guingona Jr.

Guingona said he was with Poe at a rally in Cagayan de Oro recently when he told him to lengthen his campaign speeches.

It was the first unsolicited advice he gave Poe since he joined forces with the movie actor last week to become his adviser on governance and public policy.

Guingona told reporters that he noticed how the number of people at the rally, despite waiting for hours, had swollen in anticipation of what the actor would say.

Many had not even bothered to bring food or water.

"Those who came surely want to see you and to hear what your message is for them, which is good," Guingona recalled telling the presidential aspirant.

"But I said, 'if possible, extend your speech a little bit because people have waited for six or seven hours.' His speech only lasted for about seven minutes."

The Vice President said he also urged Poe not to be "too humble" when speaking in public.

"'*Kung inaapi ka (If you are being bullied)*, you have to fight back'," Guingona said he told Poe.

"'*Kasi ang gusto ng tao, ang gusto ng Pilipino, ay lumaban ka para sa karapatan mo. Because what the people want, what Filipinos want, is for you to fight for your rights)*,*" he said.*

Guingona reiterated he would serve as Poe's adviser only during the election period.

Would he stay on if Poe won?

"I have other plans," he said.

More fire

Guingona's decision to switch political loyalties drew more fire from pro-administration congressmen, who accused him of making the move for political convenience.

"We commiserate with Vice President Guingona for having destroyed what he built all these years on his principles and convictions," said Bacolod City Rep. Monico Puentevella, a stalwart of Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats.

"If any of those remain, he should quit the vice presidency."

Lanao del Sur Rep. Benasing Macarambon of the Nationalist People's Coalition said Guingona had turned into an opposition tool in exchange for support by Poe's Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino of his wife and son, who are both running in the May elections.

He accused Guingona of trying to create a political dynasty using the KNP as vehicle. "The Vice President should not be talking about the loss of moral governance by the administration," Macarambon said.

Guingona's wife, Ruth, is running for mayor of Gingoog City. His son, Teofisto III, is running for a congressional seat in Bukidnon. *With a report from Cynthia Balana*

Aussies waffle on RP bananas

SYDNEY, Australia—One month after Australian authorities said it was safe to import bananas from the Philippines, officials said Wednesday they may have underestimated the risk that they could carry diseases.

Mary Harwood, chief executive of Biosecurity Australia, said Wednesday an error in the data used to estimate the chance that the bananas could bring diseases into the country was discovered and quarantine measures may have to be strengthened.

Last month the same agency said bananas could be safely imported from the Philippines under strict quarantine measures—infuriating local producers who claim the imports will devastate their plantations.

"Preliminary assessment indicates that ... some quarantine measures may need to be reassessed and strengthened," Harwood said in a statement, adding that the agency would hold public consultations to gather proposals for new quarantine measures.

Australia last month agreed to import Philippine bananas but hasn't set a date to start accepting shipments. It wasn't clear whether the error's discovery would affect the agreement.

"The whole thing is just a shambles," said Australian Banana Growers' Council spokesperson Len Collins. "Biosecurity has been working on this for 4 1/2 years, so you've got to ask yourselves what are they doing."

It wasn't clear what diseases could pose a greater risk to the country. AP

Tanong ng Bayan
InqTV
Ngayong Alas-10 Ng Gabi

Guingona's defection:
Sino ang talo?
Sino ang panalo?

Hindi pa tiyak kung may epekto ang paglipat ni Vice President Teofisto Guingona sa pulitika. Pero sa kanyang reputasyon kaya, bilang nasyonalista at repormista? Ang sagot nina Dean Luis Teodoro, Liberal Party president Rep. Butch Abad, at ni Guingona mismo. Ngayong alas-10 ng gabi, sa InqTV on ABC-5.

ABC

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Editor Abelardo S. Ulanday

FOUR DIGIT
5 6 6 5
(In exact order)

SUERTRES
4 8 4

MEGALOTTO 6/45
11 18 23 35 40 45

BF keeps hands off vendors

Denies Palace pressure to stop unpopular drive

By Margaux Ortiz

AFTER two years of fighting tooth and nail to implement the highly unpopular anti-vending law, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) is giving up the task and handing it back to the local governments.

"The local government units and the police are capable of taking over what we have started," said MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando said in a phone interview.

Fernando pulled the MMDA out of the sidewalk clearing operations a week after President Macapagal-Arroyo exempted public buses from the number-coding scheme.

Heavy traffic

After the President's move, unusually heavy traffic was again observed along Edsa.

Fernando said they were expecting the police to take over the clearing of places like Baclaran and Commonwealth Avenue.

Policemen were better equipped to deal with violent vendors than unarmed MMDA personnel, he explained.

"We thought long and hard before coming up with this decision," Fernando said. "In the end, I had to look out for the safety and welfare of my men."

He said three MMDA employees were killed, while countless others were hurt because of the anti-sidewalk vending drive.

Fernando added that the agency could no longer cope up with the cost of conducting clearing operations.

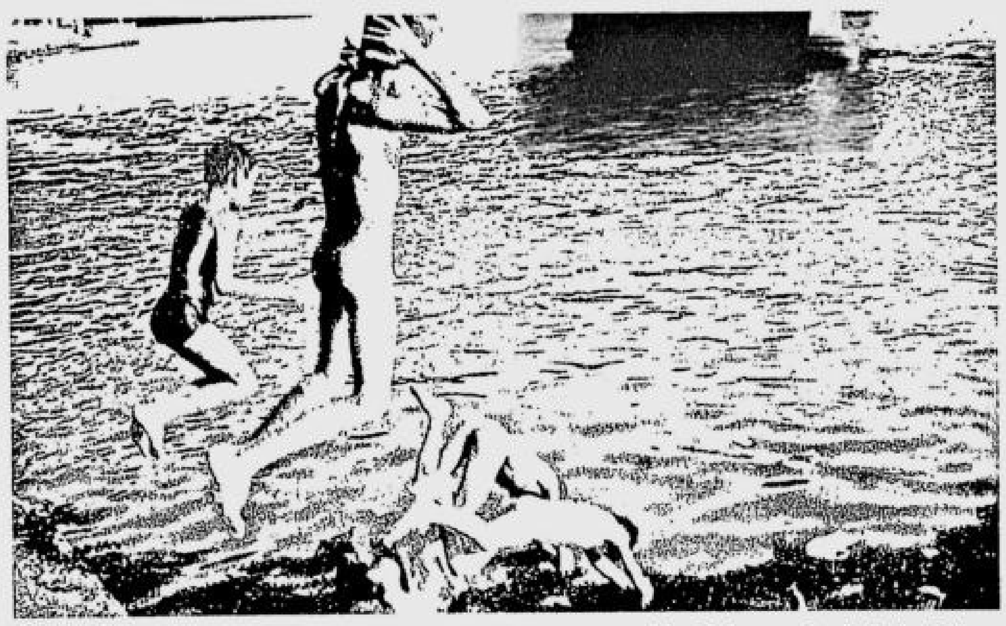
No pressure

The MMDA would now focus on removing obstructions in roads and sidewalks.

Asked whether the MMDA was ordered by Malacañang to pull out of the sidewalk clearing operations, Fernando said there was no pressure from the Palace.

President Arroyo is seeking another term as president against main rival Fernando Poe Jr., who is popular among the masses.

The clearing operations affected thousands of poor vendors.



GONE are the days when boys, like those shown in this file photo, could safely jump and swim in the Pasig River and four other rivers in the metropolis. The rivers have been declared biologically dead. JERRY ESPLANADA

5 Metro rivers declared dead

METRO Manila's five rivers have been declared biologically dead by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

"Marikina River, San Juan River, Parañaque River, the Navotas-Malabon-Tenejeros-Tullahan River and Pasig River consistently failed the DENR's standards," said Secretary Elisea Gozun, citing the 2003 pollution monitoring report.

This means that these rivers are not safe for breeding fish for food, swimming and boating.

Fish caught from any of these rivers are not fit for eating.

The DENR has been monitoring Metro Manila's five main rivers over the past 24 years and have not met environmental standards.

According to the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB), the Pasig River, which has been undergoing rehabilitation in the last 14 years, showed some improvement but it was not enough to make it pass.

"It may take more than 15 years to rehabilitate these rivers, but efforts to rehabilitate them should start now," said Gozun.

Gozun said the EMB would inform the local governments where these rivers are situated and prompt them to take action to rehabilitate the waterways.

In the 2003 pollution report, the San Juan River was shown as having the highest levels of wastewater discharged.

The DENR said these rivers were selected for assessment because of their significant contribution to the industrial and agricultural activities in the locality where they are situated. *Christine Gaylican*

Ad boycott drive goes to places, cyberspace

By Volt Contreras, Marguax Ortiz and Tina Santos

PEOPLE seeking the withdrawal of allegedly offensive advertisements for a liquor product are taking their battle to stores, provinces and even to cyberspace.

The women's group Gabriela said it would be asking liquor store owners in Metro Manila not to sell Napoleon Quince, a product of Destileria Limtuaco, which owns the controversial ads.

To counter the slogan of the Napoleon ads that say "Nakatikim ka na ba ng Kinse Años? (Have you tried a 15-year-old?)" Gabriela will be posting signs saying "Hindi kami nagbebenta ng Kinse Años (We don't sell 15-year-olds) in liquor stores."

Iloilo protest

According to Gabriela president Liza Maza, their campaign against the brandy ads has spread to Iloilo, where fellow oppositors have been picketing Destileria's offices there.

At the same time, protesters have begun circulating e-mail urging people to send protest letters to Destileria and concerned government offices and officials.

Award-winning screenwriter Bibeth Orteza yesterday joined the protest over the Brandy ad.

"I have a daughter who's turning 15. I fear (for the likes of her) because I'm also a mother," Orteza said in a press conference held by Gabriela.

Terrible mistake

"Destileria should realize that they have made a terrible mistake in coming out with an advertising campaign that attacks women and children," Maza said.

Destileria counsel Bonifacio Alentajan claimed that the company already lost P1 million in sales after some radio stations stopped airing their ads.

Meanwhile, Benny Aw, Destileria marketing president, said the company's reputation was at stake in the controversy.

Bus coding scheme snarls traffic in Edsa

THE SUSPENSION of number coding for buses has resulted in heavy traffic in Edsa for two weeks now, according to the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority.

MMDA Traffic Operations Center Director Angelito Vergel de Dios said yesterday that the additional 400 to 600 buses have been congesting Edsa since the number-coding scheme was lifted last week.

"The yellow lane is not enough to accommodate the additional volume of buses," Vergel de Dios said in a phone interview. "Even the private motorists have been affected because some of these buses go out of the yellow lane."

Vergel de Dios said that the heavy traffic is also caused by bus drivers trying to skirt traffic enforcers. *Margaux Ortiz*

Cainta cop chief sacked over robbery

By Luige del Puerto

THE POLICE chief of Cainta, Rizal, was sacked on Tuesday, a day after three bike-riding robbers stormed a rural bank in town, and escaped unscathed.

This developed even as the police detained a security guard in connection with the robbery on Monday.

The Presidential Anti-Crime and Emergency Response team (Pacer) helped traced the security guard, whose identity is being withheld at press time.

Sr. Supt. Leocadio Santiago, Rizal Police chief, said the robbery incident merely "accelerated" the removal of town police chief Supt. Edgardo Mendoza.

"He was already scheduled to be removed from Cainta. That order came from Camp Crame," Santiago said in a phone interview.

Supt. Mario Soriano, who was previously with the provincial police, replaced Mendoza, who is on leave pending the processing of papers for his new assignment.

The Rizal Police chief explained that Mendoza had a relative gunning for the town council, and should therefore not serve as police chief when the local campaign period starts in March 25.

307 arrested in Metro for gun ban violation

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

WITH about a week before the local campaign period begins, at least 307 persons have been arrested in the metropolis for violating the Commission on Elections ban on deadly weapons.

Of the 307 violators, seven are policemen and eight are soldiers, records from the National Capital Region Police Office said. A total of 162 were held in Quezon City.

The ban on deadly weapons in public places took effect last December and will stay until June 9.

Most of the arrested persons were arrested for other offenses and were later found and charged for carrying guns without necessary permits from the Comelec.

The NCRPO has also confiscated 82 high-power guns, 164 low-power guns (including homemade shotguns) and 94 bladed weapons.

With the national campaign heating up and the local campaign approaching, the police has also stepped up its security measures around the metropolis.

NCRPO spokesperson Bart Bustamante said yesterday that ridding the streets of deadly weapons is one of the security measures being implemented to thwart election-related violence.

Wanted man in US nabbed in Bulacan

By Leila B. Salaverria

ONE OF the most wanted men of the Los Angeles Police Department who is being hunted for killing a fellow Filipino was arrested on Tuesday night in Bulacan by agents of the National Bureau of Investigation.

Nabbed on the basis of a warrant was Antonio Grande, 53, who used to be a member of the Manila Diablos Filipino Gang based in California. He was arrested at the El Rancho Restaurant and Off-Betting Station in Plaridel, Bulacan, based on a petition for extradition filed upon the request of the US Department of Justice.

NBI Interpol executive officer Jun de Castro said Grande has signified his intention not to fight the extradition case the US had filed against him.

Grande is the main suspect in the April 4, 1992 killing of Virgilio Lazo, the new boyfriend of Grande's former wife Anna Suzette, in Los Angeles.

Records show that on the said date, Grande and Lazo got into a heated argument when they met at the house of Anna Suzette.

Grande went there to visit his two sons.

During the argument, Grande took out a handgun and shot Lazo six times. But Grande said yesterday that he was only defending himself from Lazo, who was going to attack him.

He said that if he had not defended himself, Lazo would have killed him. After allegedly killing Lazo, Grande returned to the Philippines.

He said that he raises fighting cocks for a living and is in the buy and sell business. He also said he used to be a barangay captain in Sta. Cruz, Manila.

Grande told media men that on hindsight, it would have been better for him to have faced the charges in the US instead of going back to the Philippines. But he sounded confident about his case. "Justice will prevail. I have witnesses," he said.

No country is safe from terrorism

ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo

THE CARNAGE in Madrid showed us that no country, whether in the First or Third World, is safe from terrorism.

Any country is easy target of terrorists who have the element of surprise on their side.

But that doesn't mean our authorities should now leave everything to Divine Providence. Vigilance should still be the guiding principle.

* * *

Top police officials from 63 countries meeting in Manila have agreed that terrorist bombings are the world's greatest scourge today.

Ronald Noble, secretary general of the Interpol (International Police) said that the simultaneous Madrid bombings that claimed 200 lives and wounded 1,500 others could happen anywhere in the world.

Even Philippine National Police chief Hermogenes Ebdane Jr., one of the conferees, admitted that it was hard to detect when another terrorist bombing like the one that happened in Madrid will take place.

Ebdane said, however, that the PNP is doing its best to "negate" the occurrence of another Madrid in the country. "I don't want to speculate but we're trying our best to negate it."

* * *

The best way to fight terrorism, Ebdane said, is for all countries to depend on one another on matters of security.

He said that interdependence among Interpol members is needed to fight terrorism.

It goes without saying that the Philippines supplies information about its homegrown terrorists to other countries, and vice versa. After all, Filipino terrorists have been trained by al-Qaida that was responsible for the bombings at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

* * *

The once-dreaded Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Isafp), the country's version of the Israeli Mossad, is now being viewed in a positive light by the citizenry.

Isafp was involved in suppressing dissent over the Marcos dictatorship, although its job is to safeguard the security of the state.

But now, Isafp is in the forefront of the government's anti-kidnapping campaign. The expert sleuthing of its agents has been responsible for the capture of notorious kidnap leaders and the busting of big kidnap gangs.

Isafp agents work under heavy cover, that's why they're not given the proper credit for the busting of a kidnap gang or the capture of kidnappers.

The National Anti-Kidnapping Task Force (Naktf) relies heavily on Isafp agents for surveillance work.

* * *

Last Saturday, the special episode of "Isumbong mo kay Tulfo" program at RPN 9 showed the capture of a kidnapper who victimized foreigners.

The kidnapper was so vicious he cut off the ear of his victim in front of a video camera and sent the footage to the victim's relatives.

The kidnapper, a Hong Kong national, was considered a genius and enjoyed matching wits with government agents whom he knew was on his trail. But he proved no match for the wits of Isafp agents.

There will be more kidnappers and kidnap gangs that will fall one after the other, thanks to Isafp, which still prefers to work under heavy cover.

By the way, you wouldn't recognize the Isafp chief, Commodore Tirso Danga, if you met him in the streets. He looks very unassuming, has a soft voice and a scholarly look. But the guy wields a big stick.

METROBRIEFS

Rama at NBI

MOVIE actress Annabelle Rama yesterday went to the National Bureau of Investigation office in Manila to give additional information that might help investigators solve the murder of actress Nida Blanca, who is one of Rama's close friends. Rama, who stayed for around 30 minutes, told reporters that she just answered a few questions regarding when she last saw Blanca alive and if it were true that she was in a restaurant in Greenhills the night before the actress was found dead at the Atlanta Center. *Leila Salaverria*

Good example

TO SET good examples, policemen in northern Metro Manila have been ordered to always use protective helmets when driving their motorcycles. Northern Police District Director Marcelino Franco directed the four police chiefs in Caloocan, Malabon, Navotas and Valenzuela to require their motorcycle-riding policemen to always wear hard hats while in transit. *Edson Tandoc Jr.*

Torres homecoming

ALL IS set for the Torres High School 2nd Grand Reunion and Homecoming on Saturday, March 20, according to THS Foundation president Enrico Capule. The day's program will start with the registration and assembly of all alumni from 1928 to 2003 at 3 p.m. to be followed by a Thanksgiving Mass at 5 p.m. Guest speaker is Hon. Jaime C. Lopez, graduate of 1952 and the incumbent Rep of the School District of (Tondo) Manila.

BIG GAMBLE
These boys, mostly of grade-school age, play Baccarat (Lucky 9) along a busy street in Barangay Poblacion, Makati City, oblivious of the danger posed by vehicles speeding by from the nearby Makati-Mandaluyong bridge. RUDY ESPERAS

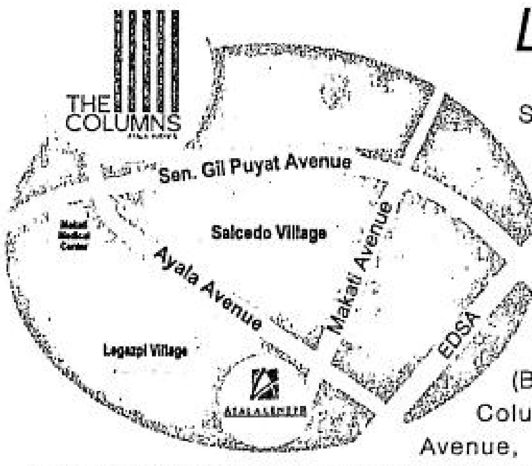
TOWER 3 NOW SELLING

Gone.
Gone.
Going...

Tower 1 and Tower 2 have enjoyed a quick sell-out. The great news is, we're opening up Tower 3 to buyers! Here's your last chance to live just a few steps from your work, shopping, and hang-out places. THE COLUMNS, Ayala Avenue is rising right at the corner of Ayala and Sen. Gil Puyat Avenues, the ideal address for young, urban achievers who want to live just a few steps from everything.

THE COLUMNS
AYALA AVENUE

Location. Location. Location.



Strategically situated at the corner of Ayala Avenue and Sen. Gil J. Puyat Avenue (Buendia), The Columns, Ayala Avenue, Community Innovations Inc.'s landmark development, has come to redefine urban living. Many have already chosen it as their city address, attracted by its combination of convenience, relaxation, and prestige.

It's the ideal first home for young urban achievers who want to live a few steps from everything. Now, with Tower 3 opening for sale, it's also the last chance to embrace The Columns experience.

Garden in the City

At The Columns, Ayala Avenue, nature communes with urban living. Its open design creates a relaxing environment both in the towers and on the ground. The green Zen-like gardens that adorn the Grand Lobbies of the three towers soothe residents and guests alike.

In the Towers

Each tower offers thirty storeys, twenty-three residential floors, rising on a continuous seven-story podium. The towers are angled to catch bright morning sunshine and avoid afternoon heat. Studio, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom units offer maximized space for the urban lifestyle, with plentiful natural light and ventilation—a prized rarity in residential condos. Splendid views stretch from the Makati skyline to Manila Bay, and selected units on each floor offer bay windows and balconies.

The Columns Experience

By integrating its amenities with its entire lifestyle, The Columns transforms itself into a relaxing refuge that openly encourages the feeling of a real neighborhood. At the seventh floor of the podium, The Recreational Club spans all three towers, and serves as the club and meeting place for this vertical village. Two pools, a fitness center, a game room, function halls, a broad outdoor patio, and a day care center and playground fit the needs of every Columns resident. A jogging path and barbecue areas offer features uncommon to condos. It's all about creating community.

The Ground Floor of The Columns offers outdoor cafes and dining spots clustered around three landscaped plazas. With its quaint shops and al fresco lifestyle, the Ground Floor aims to be a destination in itself at its end of Ayala Avenue.

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SPORTS

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SPORTS TV
Compiled by L. Manguiat

BASKETBALL: NBA-Kings vs Wizards; 8 a.m. (r-10 p.m.); Solar Sports; Nuggets vs Celtics; 7 p.m.; IBC 13—Pacific Division-leading Sacramento faces upset-minded Washington while upstart Denver takes on struggling Boston.

Vintage NBA-Maurice Cheeks; 11 a.m.; Solar Sports—Take a closer look at the former point guard of the Philadelphia 76ers.

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

- **Tanquincen named new Ginebra coach** /A23
- **Pagunsan hot favorite in Tour** /A24

/A23 /A24

Young lifts Alaska Aces past Express

By June Navarro

GALEN Young registered the first triple double of the series as the Alaska Aces posted a 105-80 rout of the FedEx Express in the Gran Matador PBA Fiesta Conference last night at the Araneta Coliseum.

Young lobbed in 27 points on top of 12 rebounds and 12 assists to lead the Aces to a fourth win in five games that put them a game behind unbeaten leader San Miguel Beer (4-0).

GAME TODAY (*Dumaguete City*)
5:30 p.m.—Coca-Cola vs SMB

"Galen showed his versatility on the floor and that made him very tough to guard. You don't know what he's gonna do and that's a big mystery for other teams to unravel," said Alaska coach Tim Cone.

Young did all the damage in the first three quarters then left everything in the hands of Mike Cortez and Ali Peek in the final period.

Vergel Meneses unleashed 13 of his team-high 19 points in the third period, but it was not enough to prevent the Express from taking their fourth straight loss.

Mike Maddux, tapped by the Express to replace Jefferson, failed to secure the necessary working permit in time, forcing coach Bonnie Garcia to put his money again on Jefferson.

In another development, PBA officials had decided to adopt a wait-and-see attitude before dipping its hands into the proposed basketball superbody.

"There are questions to be considered on the structure of the superbody. We want the plan to be known with respect to the funding and recognition of the Philippine Olympic Committee and the International Basketball Federation (Fiba," said PBA chair Buddy Encarnado.

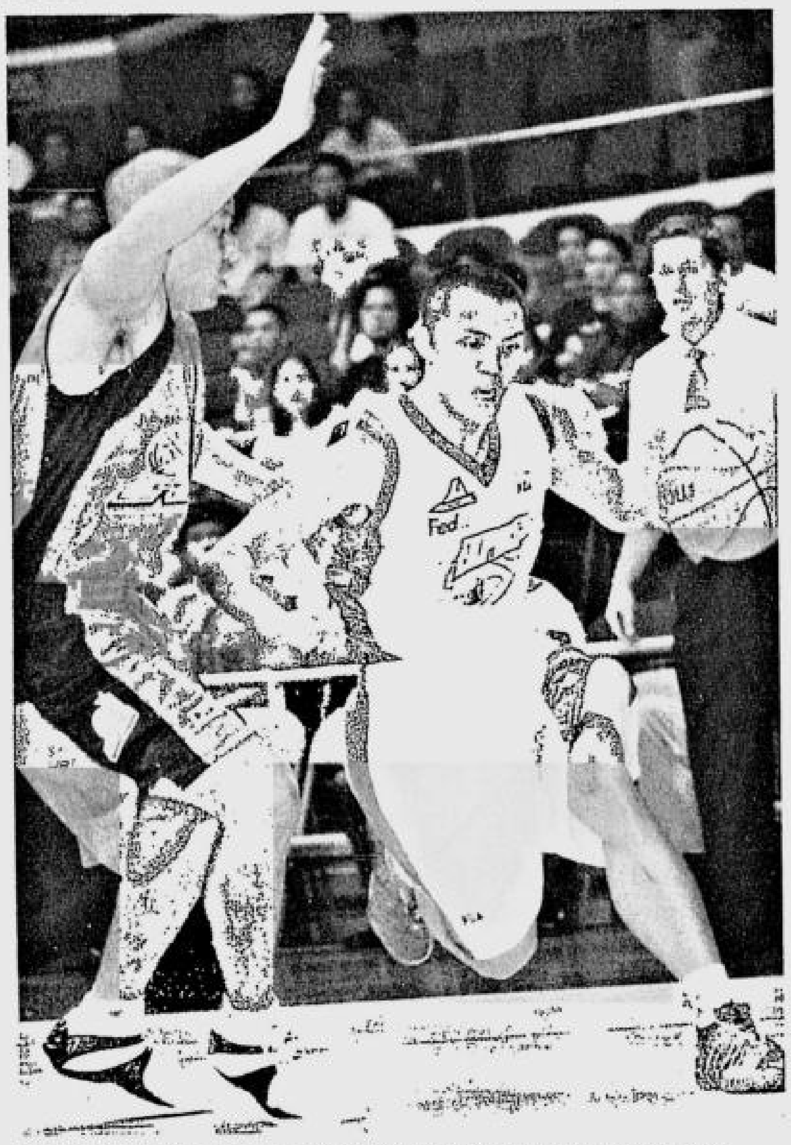
In the second game, Willie Miller hit a fadeaway jumper with 1.9 ticks left to carry Talk 'N Text past Sta. Lucia Realty, 92-94, for the Phone Pals' fourth win in five games. The Realtors dropped to 0-5.

Scores:

ALASKA 105—Young 27, Peek, 22, Cortez 13, Cablay 10, Allado 8, Feihl 7, Thoss 6, Duat 6, Camaso 4, Wilson 2, Padilla 0, Tejada 0.

FEDEX 80—Meneses 19, Jefferson 14, Yap 12, Billones 10, De Ocampo 9, Gonzales 4, Pingris 4, Ferriols 4, Ritualo 2, Arboleda 2, Rodriguez 0.

Quarters: 30-18, 58-36, 80-65, 105-80



FORMER LaSallites Ren Ren Ritualo (right) of FedEx and Alaska's Willie Wilson go up against each other. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

MAY 8

Pacquiao-Marquez fight at MGM Grand

Salven L. Lagumbay, *Contributor*

PACQUIAO

AFTER weeks of aggressive bidding by three major hotels in Las Vegas, the world-famous MGM Grand Hotel and Casino has been chosen as the venue for the mammoth featherweight showdown between Ring Magazine champ Manny Pacquiao and WBA-IBF king Juan Manuel Marquez on May 8.

The MGM's Grand Garden Arena, home of mega-concerts, championship boxing and premier special events will host the fight, and also the June 5 twinbill featuring Oscar De la Hoya and Bernard Hopkins facing separate opponents in Felix Sturm and Robert Allen.

The Pacquiao-Marquez bout will be telecast live by HBO.

"Originally, three major hotels were vying to host the fight, one of the most highly anticipated matches of the year, but when the original May 22 date fell through it left two of the casinos unable to make changes to their schedules. That opened the door for promoters Murad Muhammad and Bob Arum to strike a deal with the MGM Grand," reported Fightnews yesterday.

Pacquiao will leave the country on Friday to immediately hook up with trainer Freddie Roach at the latter's Wild Card Gym in Los Angeles. Joining Pacquiao in the trip are US promoter Murad Muhammad, business manager Rod Nazario, Lito Mondejar, personal trainer Buboy Fernandez and the HBO crew which shot footages of Pacquiao here.

Pacquiao's wife Jinkee and their two sons—Emmanuel Jr. and Michael Stephen—will follow the group soon.

Muhammad, in the country together with the HBO crew, was slated to meet with some influential personalities to study the possibility of bringing Pacquiao's next big fight here to be called "Thrilla in Manila 2."

The Pacquiao-Marquez clash was originally slated on May 22, but had to be moved earlier with WBC lightweight champ Floyd Mayweather having difficulty finding an opponent for his May 8 headliner.

Mayol, Tampus KO rivals

UNBEATEN Rodel "Kid Rapido" Mayol and Marvin Tampus showed why they are the region's best boxers in the lighter divisions by knocking out their respective Indonesian rivals Tuesday in a televised card in Jakarta.

Mayol, the Oriental and Pacific Boxing Federation (OPBF) minimum weight champion, knocked out world rated Iwan Key in the sixth round with a left to the ribcage.

Inspired by Mayol's win, Tampus, the reigning Pan Asian Boxing Association (Paba) junior flyweight champ, put away Anis Ceunfin in the first round.

Tampus opened a nasty cut over Ceunfin's eye with a series of blows, forcing the referee to stop the fight following the advice of the ring physician.

Tampus' technical knockout win improved his record to 14-1 with nine knockouts while Mayol raised his unbeaten slate to 16 with 12 KOs.

Meanwhile, Paba director general Alan Kim of South Korea said he would approve a proposed Tampus title defense in Indonesia on April 13.

"His manager (Joy Ouaño of Lilo-an, Cebu) told me that they are arranging Tampus' third title defense in Jakarta," said Kim in a telephone interview with the INQUIRER yesterday.

Mayol is currently ranked No.3 in the World Boxing Council, while Tampus is ranked No. 4 by the WBA. *Rey Danseco, Contributor*

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Tanquincen new Ginebra mentor

Caidic now team manager

By June Navarro

THE MERRY-GO-ROUND of key personnel of PBA teams under the San Miguel Corp. flagship continued yesterday with Siot Tanquincen taking over as coach of Barangay Ginebra starting today.

Tanquincen, coach Jong Uichico's deputy at San Miguel Beer, replaces Allan Caidic, who moves up as Ginebra team manager over Eric Altamirano.

A former Purefoods coach, Altamirano will now concentrate on his job as project director of the touring SMC All-Stars, made up of former PBA players, some of whom are still fit to play in the pro league.

A former UST Tiger in the early '90s, Tanquincen will begin calling the shots for the Gin Kings against Red Bull Barako on Saturday at the Ynares Center in Antipolo City.

"This is the biggest break of my career. I feel somehow pressured since I will be handling the most popular team in the PBA but at the same time happy with the confidence given by the management," said Tanquincen.

Tanquincen, 32, has yet to receive his appointment papers but was informed Tuesday of the new development by no less than Caidic, who served as the Gin Kings' bench tactician for almost five seasons.

Altamirano was installed Barangay Ginebra team manager at the start of the PBA Fiesta Conference while overseeing the operations of the SMC All-Stars, who promote the sport and endorse San Miguel products in the countryside.

His appointment last February came simultaneously with SMC's designation of three other former PBA stars as managers of its three other teams in the league—Chito Loyzaga for San Miguel Beer, Hector Calma for Coca-Cola and Ed Cordero for Purefoods.

Tanquincen had a brief stint with the Beermen in the late '90s.

The La Tondeña franchise last won in the 1997 Commissioner's Cup playing as Gordon's Gin under Robert Jaworski. It was also Jaworski, now a senator, who gave Ginebra its first and only PBA title in the 1991 First Conference.

Caidic, known as The Triggerman during his PBA days, had compiled a total of 59 victories against 90 losses since calling the shots for the Gin Kings in the 1999 Governors Cup.

Caidic steered Ginebra to a runner-up finish behind SMB in the 2001 All-Filipino Cup.

TANQUINCEN

CAIDIC

'Breakfast'

LEE Pipes-Ateneo, one of the two newcomers in the coming 2004 PBL Unity Cup, appears today in the popular morning show, Breakfast, on Studio 23 from 6:30 to 8. The team is going to present its lineup and drum up support for the season-opening tournament set to start on March 28 at the Makati Coliseum.

Mindanao still wants SEAG part

By Marc Anthony Reyes

DON'T count Mindanao out of the Southeast Asian Games.

Pencak silat association president and newly appointed Presidential Adviser for Muslim Royalty Affairs Sultan Jamalul Kiram III yesterday made that appeal before the 2005 SEAG organizers who opted to skip Mindanao as one of the Games' venues.

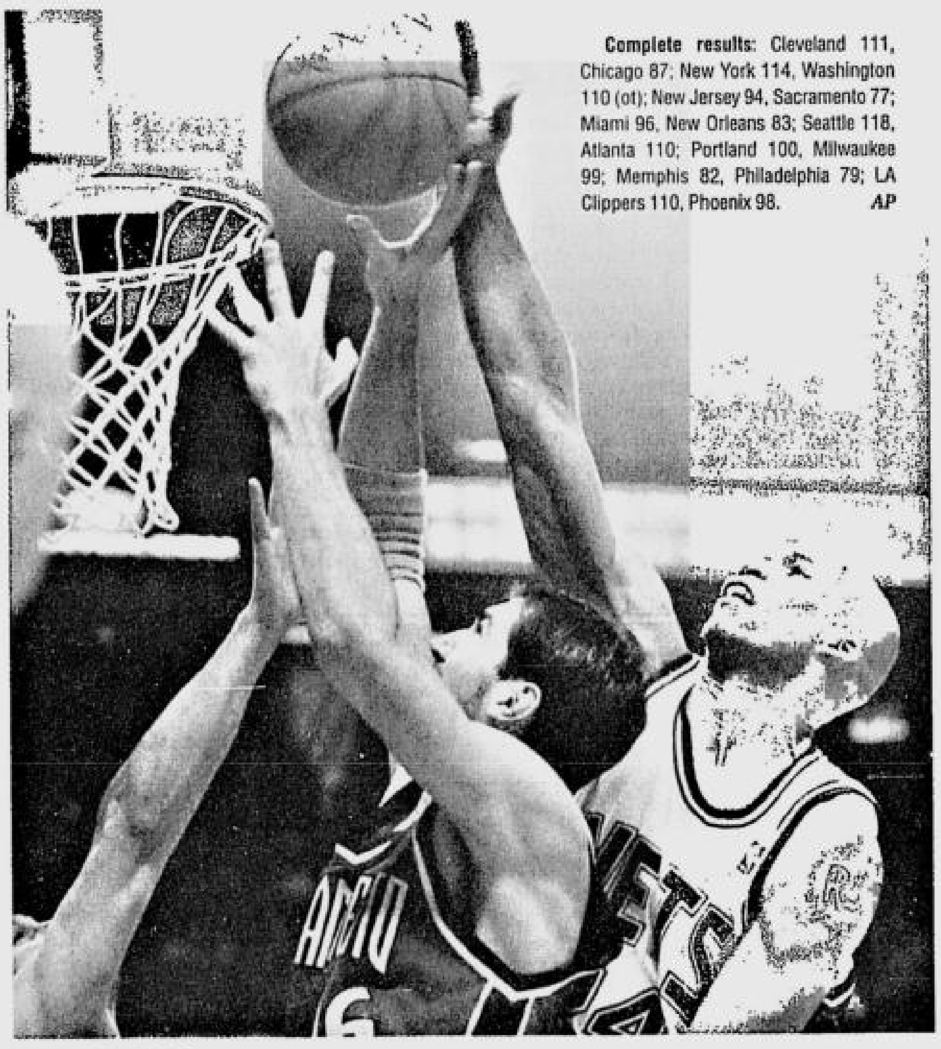
He said Philsoc's decision not to include Mindanao "greatly undermined" the peacekeeping efforts exerted by the national government as initiated by President Arroyo.

The Philsoc earlier stressed that members of the SEAG Federation council are concerned over the safety of the athletes and officials if some of the events were held in the region.

But Kiram said "choosing not to hold the Games there (Mindanao) is practically admitting that the region is indeed unsafe for tourist, which is not true at all."

"On behalf of the people of Mindanao, I must ask the POC to reconsider its decision not to include Mindanao as one of the SEA Games venues because the peace and order problem in our land is not forever and is continuously being worked out by the government," he said.

Kiram was given a toast by 14 national sports association officials that included Go Teng Kok of athletics and Buddy Andrada of tennis.



NBA ACTION
New Jersey Nets' Richard Jefferson (right) blocks Sacramento Kings' Peja Stojakovic during their NBA game Tuesday. The Nets prevailed, 94-77.

Complete results: Cleveland 111, Chicago 87; New York 114, Washington 110 (ot); New Jersey 94, Sacramento 77; Miami 96, New Orleans 83; Seattle 118, Atlanta 110; Portland 100, Milwaukee 99; Memphis 82, Philadelphia 79; LA Clippers 110, Phoenix 98. *AP*

For Lucio & Henry

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

LEAH Tinsay, who used to teach at the Philippine Women's University, holds the record of being the first and so far the only female to captain a team in the fabled PAL Interclub Golf Championship. She also holds the record of being the only team captain who has been barred from playing in the annual PAL Team Captains Tournament the last four years.

Crazy you'd say?

Read on.

"The official reason given is, I am a woman," said Leah, a well-loved scion of Bacolod City.

The petite, ballroom-dancing dynamite, went to Japan 17 years ago to pursue a career teaching English. She would wind up heading her own high-profile consultancy firm (T.E.X.T.) now serving several big-time Japanese corporations in Tokyo.

"I would like to believe I have made my mark in my chosen career path," said Leah. "But life to me is meaningless if I can't pursue my first love, which is golf."

She has become philanthropic in that she has required each member of her team to pay $5 for every OB and four-putt miscue committed "to be given as donation to the caddies fund" of the Negros Occidental Golf & Country Club in Bacolod. That rule stays even when the PAL Interclub is off.

She's not complaining really, but her being a woman has deprived Leah of her rightful slot in the PAL Team Captains Tournament for so long this injustice has got to end. I will not be surprised if Gabriela would soon pick up her cause.

If there's such a PAL Interclub rule disallowing a female team captain from participating in the PAL Team Captains Tournament, that sucks. I was told there's a rule, but it isn't in black and white. Be that as it may, it must nonetheless be deleted.

Simple logic, if not common sense, tells us that the PAL Team Captains Tournament is not gender specific. By the very name of the tournament, it does not single out males as the only qualified persons to join it. To be sure, it says "Team Captains," not "Male Team Captains."

I'm almost sure Lucio Tan, the reasonable owner of Philippine Airlines, does not know about this. Neither does Henry So Uy, the no-nonsense executive vice president of Philippine Airlines.

I'm almost sure, too, that if they knew about it, they would be the first to overrule those who blocked Leah's participation in the PAL Team Captains Tournament four years running—and counting?

That's the trouble with some of the people entrusted by Lucio Tan to run the PAL Interclub, which had just concluded its 57th edition in Cagayan de Oro City. They sometimes tend to overstep the bounds, if not be overly dogmatic, in effect burying altogether the fun side of the event which the Team Captains tiff is all about anyway: Fun.

For all the hurt she had suffered—and would continue to suffer unless the verbal rule is stricken out—Leah Tinsay has not complained one teeny weeny bit. In fact, she's promised to come back again with her team next year.

Oh, yes, she did write Domeng Duerme, the PAL Interclub chair, sometime ago but only to request that she be allowed to play as a guest player in the PAL Interclub.

"I just wanted to play, with my scores not to be counted," Leah said. "When my appeal got turned down, I took it in stride."

Still, the rejection had a tinge of weirdness.

Leah Tinsay had been allowed before to play as guest in the PAL Interclub—making her yet the first female to play in the prestigious national golf team championship. That was some four years ago, when she first captained her Japanese-Filipino Golf Association Team composed mostly of Japanese businessmen based in Tokyo.

Why she had been allowed as a guest player. and next barred from playing the following year smacked of inconsistency.

But I can forgive that. The PAL Interclub is a men's tournament, period.

What I can't forgive, can't accept, is Domeng Duerme's decision to accept Buddy Resurreccion's decision to disallow Leah Tinsay from joining the PAL Team Captains Tournament four years in a row just because Leah Tinsay is a woman.

Something's got to be done to save the PAL Interclub from being soon labeled a haven for male chauvinist pigs. I hate to see the PAL Interclub getting stormed by placard-bearing Gabriela members crying, "Down with Lucio Tan!"

Nothing is late in this world.

Allow Leah Tinsay to play in the PAL Interclub Team Captains Tournament next year—in her land of birth yet that is Bacolod—and all is forgiven.

Now if Lucio Tan's minions would insist that Leah Tinsay undergo a sex change to earn a ticket to next year's Team Captains tournament, then that's it. I'm calling in not only Gabriela but also Ate Glow.

Any objections?

***

FASTBREAK. Congratulations to Warner Manning, the chief executive officer of HSBC, for putting together tomorrow's (March 19) HSBC Invitational golf tournament that will stake a Mercedes Benz E 200 Kompressor as a hole-in-one prize at Eagle Ridge. I will miss the event for the first time in four years and my dear Laine will understand. There's this engagement I could not afford to miss…Today (Thursday) at Canlubang, the Masters golf tournament will be held to raise funds for the Masters Academy Scholarship program. Good luck, fellas.

SPORTSWATCH

Agassi, Federer barge into q'finals

INDIAN WELLS, California— Andre Agassi moved into the quarterfinals of the Pacific Life Open with a 7-5, 6-2 victory Tuesday over Russia's Mikhail Youzhny. Top-ranked Roger Federer of Switzerland, and Argentinians Juan Ignacio Chela and Guillermo Coria also were among the fourth-round winners. In the women's competition, Lindsay Davenport earned a quarterfinals berth with a straight sets win over fellow American Meghann Shaughnessy. Federer ran his record for the year to 19-1 with a methodical 6-4, 6-1 victory over America's Mardy Fish. The win was the Swiss star's 24th in 25 matches dating to his Tennis Masters Cup championship last November. Chela, who ousted two-time defending champion Lleyton Hewitt of Australia a day earlier, came back with a 6-4, 6-2 victory over Germany's Tommy Haas. Coria lost the first set but came back to beat Frenchman Sebastien Grosjean, 3-6, 7-6 (2), 6-2. Former No. 1 Davenport, back at full strength after fighting injuries the past three years, beat Shaughnessy 6-1, 6-3. *AP*

Adventure race kicks off April 24

PARTICIPANTS of the first leg of the Enduro San Mig Light Adventure Race face more outdoor challenges as the race kicks off on April 24 in Boracay. This year's race innovates from the conventional formats of running, kayaking, rappelling, orienteering and swimming to include parasailing, caving, zip line and scuba diving. The race courses of the elite and fun categories are being developed by brothers Jason and Jerome Luengo, who are former adventure racers and finishers of the tough eight-day New Zealand Eco-Challenge. Registration is from March 15 to April 21 for the Boracay leg. Entry fee is P2,000 for both categories. Interested parties may call the hotline at 412-8660 or register through http://www.sanmiglight.com. *Trina Ibarle*

BEST summer sessions slated

MILO BEST Center, the country's premier basketball school for 25 years now, unwraps the first of its two summer sessions on April 1, 2 and 3 in five venues— Ateneo College covered courts, Our Lady of Guadalupe Minor Seminary along Edsa, St. Benedict College, San Beda and Jose Rizal University. Classes will be held on Mondays and Thursdays from April 1 to 29 at Ateneo and Our Lady of Guadalupe Minor Seminary along Edsa, Tuesdays and Fridays from April 2 to 30 also at Ateneo and St. Benedict College and Wednesdays and Thursdays from April 3 to 28 at San Beda and Jose Rizal. Coaches led by BEST Center founder and president Nic Jorge will conduct classes in various levels and age groups for boys and girls starting from age 5. Registration is now in full swing at The BEST Center, 34 Scout Lozano corner Scout Reyes, Barangay Laging Handa, QC (411-6260 and 372-3065/66) and at Dansei Groom Shop/Sensei Salon, 5th floor, Manila Pavilion Hotel, UN Avenue, Manila (525-8191).

Winning Time Jobo eyes crown

AFTER bagging the 2004 World Slasher Cup title last January, the team of former PBA commissioner Rudy Salud and Lito Orillaza will gun for another championship when the "National Cockers Association (NCA) 7-Cock Derby" finals gets going at 5 p.m. today at the fully air-conditioned Araneta Coliseum. Salud and Orillaza's bet, Winning Time Jobo, racked up three come-from-behind victories last Monday, reminiscent of their World Slasher Cup performance. Also with three wins are Boy de Roca and Boy Royo of Rizal (PEBR Firefly Sa Las Piñas March 27) and Rep. Rudy Albano of Isabela (Mulawin A Jimafer). Within striking distance with 2.5 points is pre-derby favorite Firefly Thunderbird 13 of the NYS Group. For inquiries, contact 911-3101 and 911-2928 (look for Gloria Avena).

Slasher Cup ng Masa 6-cocker

A BIG field of participants is expected in Roligon Mega Cockpit's "Slasher Cup Ng Masa 6-Cock Derby" slated on March 24, 26, 29 and 31. A whopping guaranteed prize of P1.5 million is up for grabs, while entry fee is P8,800, said derby host and tabloid executive Rey Briones, who will be supported by Roligon owner Rolly Ligon. Elimination rounds will be held on March 24 and 26, while the semifinals is on March 29. All qualifiers will advance to the finals on March 31. Additional details may be obtained by calling 833-2275, 833-1638, 852-9774 and 852-9812 (look for Aubrey, Shirley or Tiling).

Bacolod hosts aerobics marathon

THE GLOBE gentxt Invasion competitive/sports aerobics marathon goes to Sugarlandia with the staging of the event's Bacolod City leg on Saturday, March 20, at the Riverside College. Registration starts at 12 noon, while the competition is slated from 1 to 5 p.m. Globe gentxt assistant product manager Gretchen Montelibano expects a huge cast to participate. Interested parties may contact Team Ventures' coordinator in Bacolod, Roger Banzuela, at 034-4346929 or Mon Eusebio, 0917-2545742.

SAN FERNANDO CHESSFEST. San Fernando City Mayor Mary Jane C. Ortega awards the trophy and P80,000 champion's prize to IM Barlo Nadera during the recent La Union Chess Open. From left are Gov. Victor Ortega, tournament director; engineer Joseph Dumuk, GM Eugene Torre and NCFP secretary general lawyer Samuel D. Estimo.

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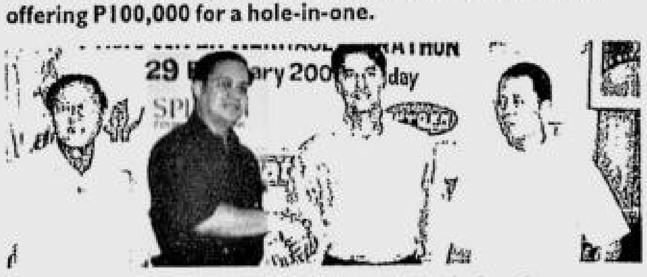
HOLE-IN-ONE SPONSOR. The CICI General Insurance Corp. has agreed to serve as hole-in-one sponsor for Eagle Ridge Golf and Country Club's inaugural club championship at the Faldo course on April 3-4. Signing the memorandum of agreement are Edwin Celino (center), president and CEO of CICI, ERGCC general manager James Balagtas and ERGCC membership affairs manager Mitch Perez.CICI is offering P100,000 for a hole-in-one.



OFFICIAL FOOTWEAR. Avia, a leading brand of performance footwear in the United States, is the official shoes of the recent Pasig River Heritage Marathon. Shown during the contract signing are (from left) Patafa secretary general Ben Silva-Netto, Avia marketing consultant Reli de Leon, PRHM chair Herminio Esguerra and Gomburza national chair Fr. Robert Reyes.

SAMSUNG TOUR

Pagunsan hot favorite in final

BATANGAS—Everybody feels Juvic Pagunsan shouldn't be here in the first place. It's just that he belongs to a different breed, or a different planet.

With the Philippine Open runner-up around, the others may have to fight for second place when the leg champions of the Samsung Amateur Tour clash to settle who among them is the best in a 36-hole grand final starting today at the Mt. Malarayat Golf and Country Club course here.

Already good for the pros, Pagunsan will have to contend with just a few challengers in his first event, since his Canlubang team lost its bid for a fifth straight crown in the PAL Interclub in Cagayan de Oro to local team Del Monte.

And Pagunsan will have his eyes set on a mainstay of the Del Monte squad, Tristan Tabanas who is in the elite field that also includes Jay Bayron, Gene Bondoc, Mark Lopez, Ronnie Torrecampo, Jovy Neri and JR Tanpinco.

The showdown for the ladies plum between former national ladies champion Carmelette Villaroman and jungolfer Remijin Camping should also add spice to the the tourney co-sponsored by Mario's Restaurant, Wilson, Gatorade, Tokyo Tokyo, Microtel, Custom Clubmakers, Rogin-E and Dunlop Golf with radio stations Killer Bee, Jam 88.3, Wave 89.1, Magic 89.9, 99.5 RT and 103.5 K-Lite as official media partners.

It will be a return match for Camping and Villaroman after Camping scored a stunning upset last year.

The returning leg champions of the other divisions in men's Class A, Class B and Class C as well as Ladies Class B are out to make sure that they get their share of the prize package of cellular phones and appliances put up by Samsung.

Meanwhile, 48 national qualifiers of the Samsung Putting Challenge will dispute the top awards in the divisions for men, seniors, juniors and ladies. Competitions start at 1 p.m.

Boy Blue Ocampo of the organizing Professional Sports Management Group said that everything's ready for the Tournament of Champions and everyone just wants a piece of Pagunsan.

PAGUNSAN (left) with father Juanito during the recent Ubix-Riviera National Pro-Am Golf Championship. PDI PHOTO

Country Club invit'l tourney unfolds today

By Musong Castillo, *Contributor*

CANLUBANG, Laguna—Frankie Miñoza will miss a major tournament on local soil for the second straight time, paving the way for a tight, exciting four-day action in the P3.85 million The Country Club Invitational, which gets going today in Canlubang, Laguna.

The top 40 local parbusters, led by defending champion Cassius Casas, tee off for the second edition of one of the biggest, richest professional golf tournaments in the country on a course that offers little promise of low scores.

From a par 72 last year, The Country Club will now play two strokes less after organizers reduced two par-5s into long par-4s to make the hunt for the P1.1 million top purse a wide open affair.

Designed by Tom Weiskopf, The Country Club rewards accurate iron play and punish wayward shots off the tee. It also owns one of the best finishing holes in golf, a slight dogleg, 434-yard par-4 with a huge lake to the right and a very small, multi-tiered green.

Casas, who learned the game at another tough course, Mt. Apo in Davao, does not exactly set out as the odds-on pick to win this event regarded as the biggest in the land after the Philippine Open.

Casas has been struggling the past year, and anyone who comes into this tournament without his A-Game will find the course one tough nut to crack considering its length and the winds that howl over it constantly.

Miñoza has begged off to fulfill a commitment in the Japanese Tour, and former Philippine Open champion Gerald Rosales will also miss the event, opting to play in the European Tour's Singapore Open.

But Asian Tour regulars Danny Zarate, Mars Pucay and Carito Villaroman are also in the fold along with the rest of the top 21 finishers in last year's inaugurals who have been given automatic slots.

The rest of the cast has been tapped by the sponsors headed by Enrique K. Razon Jr., who put up the tournament last year to honor the memory of his father, Don Pocholo, an avid golfer like him.

Others seeing action are Tony Lascuña, Robert Pactolerin, Angelo Que, Ruben Sasutil, Richard Sinfuego, Cesar Ababa, Rey Alit, Eddie Bagtas, Ramil Bisera, Dan Cruz, Rodrigo Cuello and Cookie La'O.

SAN Andres (right) with his No. 1 fan from Palawan, Dina Belmonte.

San Andres overwhelms 'moto' field

REVTEX Wonder Boy Kenneth San Andres displayed another overpowering show in the third stop of the 2004 Philippine National Motocross Championships at the Brooke's Point in Palawan recently.

The 15-year-old San Andres posted two masterful wins to keep his record immaculate in both the Novice Open and 125.

San Andres, the 2003 National Junior Rider of the Year and a Philippine Sportswriter Association (PSA) awardee for junior motocross for three straight years since 2001, notched two coast-to-coast victories with his teammate Joey Barnedo to make it a 1-2 finish in both the novice divisions.

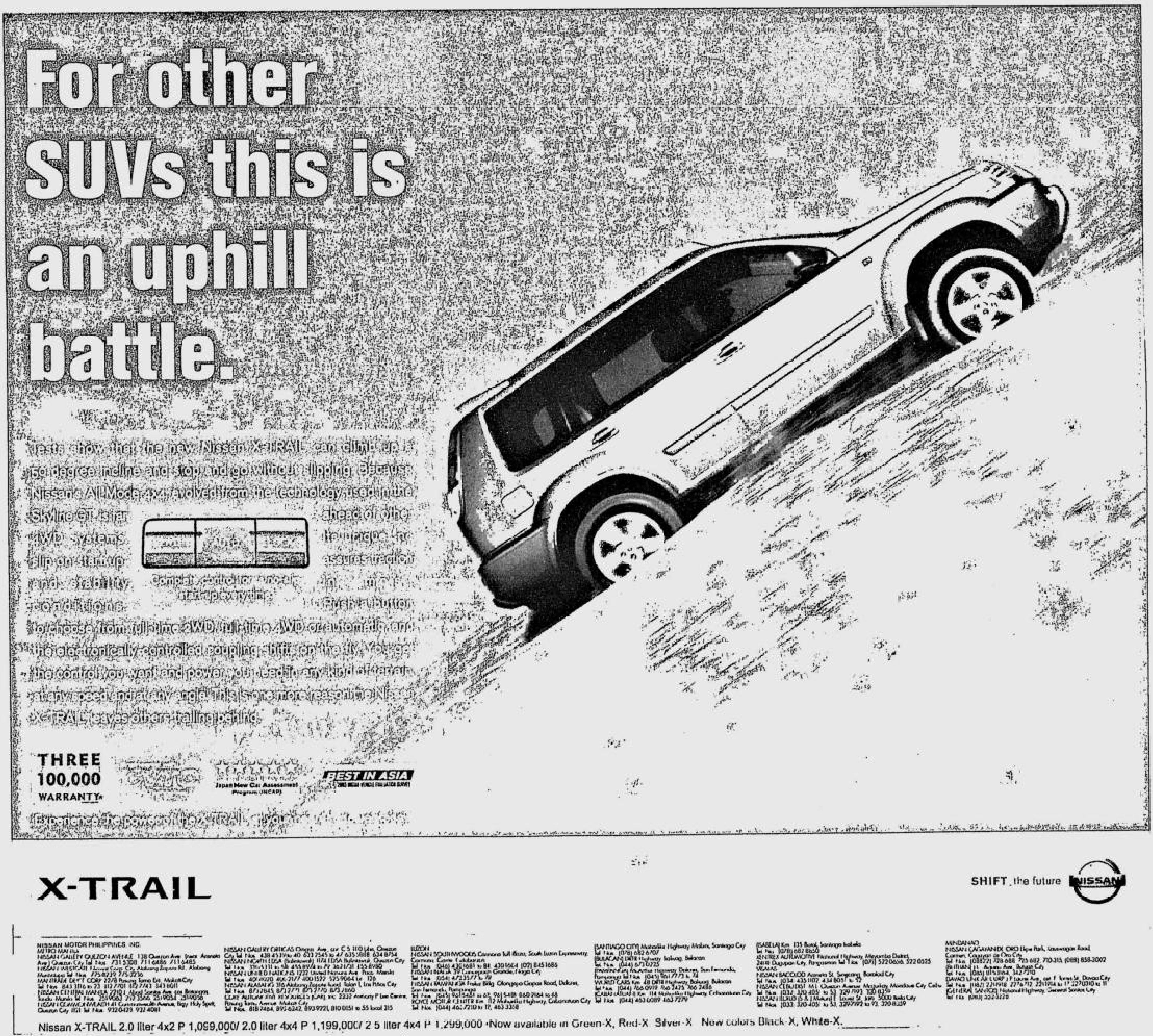
San Andres was particularly impressive in the Novice 125 where he crossed the finish line almost 100 meters ahead of his runner-up. The Novice 125 is where the sanctioning National Motorcycle Sports and Safety Association (Namssa) will be choosing its Rookie of the Year.

What made the feat all the more impressive is the fact that San Andres is using a mere 85cc bike to his older opponents' more powerful units.

San Andres, who is also backed by Sukida Motorcycles, Oakley, Remcor Motors, HJC Helmet, UFO, Renthal, Alpine Star, Accerbis and JBS Bikeshop, also won the first two stops of the PNMC series in Batangas and La Union, ruling both the two novice divisions.

"I am amazed at his maturity," said Kenneth's father-coach Jun-Jun, himself a Revtex rider.

Other Revtex winners in the third leg were Revtex Rocket Glenn Aguilar in the Pro Open and 125, Alvin Beech in the expert class and Barnedo in the Beginner's Class. Even Revtex's youth riders joined in the domination, with Jensen Manuel, Jerrick Mitra and Raf Enriquez finishing 1-2-3 in the Junior category.



For other SUVs this is an uphill battle.

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Alden Joshua Cedo, Graphics Design

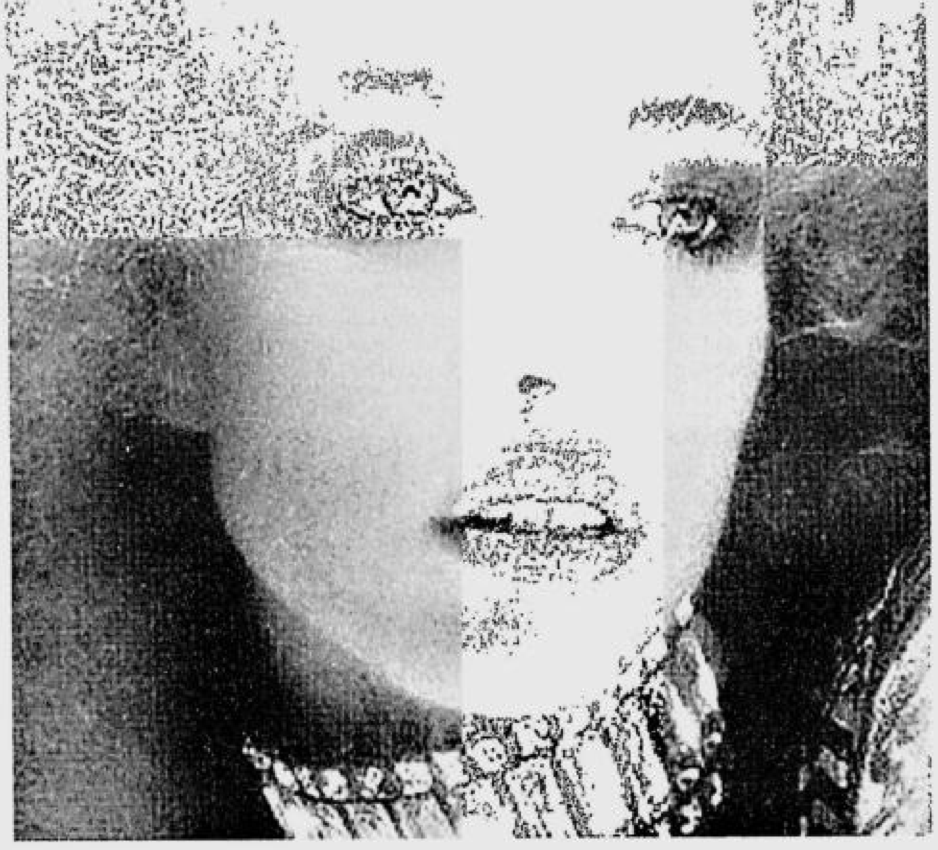
Astoria Plaza hosts Dior Spring Look 2004 workshop

ASTORIA Plaza, in cooperation with Rustan's, will host the Dior Spring Look 2004 Make-up Workshop at the hotel's Chelsea Function Room on March 31 at 6 p.m. The workshop includes interactive hands-on demonstration and product sampling, and will be conducted by Bo Ramas-Ross, Rustan's cosmetics and toiletries division brand manager.

Dior's new spring/summer shades consist of colors such as Earthglow 680 for sultry eyes in burnt earth tones; Seascape 250 to make waves in blue and mauve with shimmering white in the center; Precious Navy 273 for dramatic eyes with a shimmer shade; Maxi Night 273 mascara for unforgettable eyes in intense midnight blue; Peach Veil 553 for the delicately silky look; Firelight 863 for the more intense, but still perfectly sheer; and Dior Blush for two chic shades that sweep cheeks with a natural glow.

The Rustan's cosmetic workshop is a series of workshops featuring today's different top-of-the-line brands. The Dior Spring Look 2004 Workshop is open to the public. For invitations and reservations, call Rustan's office at 633-4636 and ask to be connected to the Dior counter. The Dior Spring Look 2004 Workshop is a joint treat of Christian Dior and Rustan's in cooperation with Astoria Plaza.

Dior's new spring/summer shades consist of colors such as Earthglow 680 for sultry eyes in burnt earth tones



The Oriental Spa treats graduates

MANDARIN Oriental, Manila rewards this year's graduates with a fabulous feel-good treat when they dine with their friends and families at The Tivoli or Tin Hau, Mandarin Oriental's premier restaurants, from March 15 to April 5.

For every minimum food and beverage bill of P12,800++ at Tin Hau and P16,800++ at The Tivoli, graduates get a complimentary massage treatment at The Oriental Spa, a two-level luxury spa at the hotel's topmost floors. Choice of treatments, all of which lasts 60 glorious minutes at the expert hands of the spa's Thai-trained therapists, include Swedish Aromatic, Remedial Therapeutic, Shiatsu Acupressure and Thai Asian Blend, each promising a rejuvenating and relaxing experience for the deserving graduate.

Diners may choose from the restaurants' set or a la carte menus. A sample of Tin Hau's set menu offered at P1,180++ per person for a minimum of eight includes Roasted Beijing duck, Braised shark's fin soup with assorted seafood, Stir-fried fresh scallops with pacific clams and green vegetables in XO sauce, Deep-fried crispy prawns, Steamed garoupa in soya sauce, Stir-fried minced duck wrapped in lettuce, Stewed asparagus, black mushrooms and bamboo pith in crab roe sauce, Baked crabs in salt and pepper, Seafood fried rice wrapped in lotus leaf, Chilled mango pudding, and Chinese petit fours.

While a set meal at the Tivoli proffers dishes like salad of marinated shrimps and mango accompanied by lemongrass, skewered tandoori scallops, and arugula-pesto marinated salmon; Beef consommé with poached duck liver and root vegetables; Lychee sherbet with kahlua liquor; Pan-fried fillet of salmon in pesto oil set on prawn saffron risotto, arugula-grape relish and tomato compote; Oven-roasted rack of Spring lamb set on fried curried polenta cake, sautéed asparagus, onion tarte tatin and sauce piquant; and for dessert, warm chocolate chip pudding with vanilla sauce and Grand Marnier berries, and coffee or Tea and Pralines at P1,450++ per person. Rates are subject to prevailing local tax and 10 percent service charge. For inquiries and reservations, call 750-8888 extension 2431 for The Tivoli, and 2422 for Tin Hau.

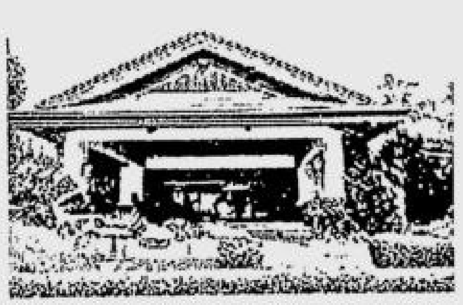
Waterfront Hotels and Casinos gear for Indulgence Plus 2004

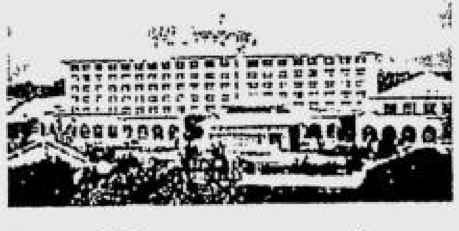
WITH the overwhelming success of last year's Indulgence Plus program, Waterfront Hotels & Casinos (WHC) is gearing up for another round of irresistible offerings.

"With the re-launch of Indulgence Plus, guests now have the chance to relive and enjoy delicious perks and generous discounts in any of the three Waterfront Hotels & Casinos," delivers WHC corporate sales and marketing director Joey Bernardino. Added value, convenience and affordability comes in a prepaid booklet containing six overnight privilege vouchers for the price of five, plus one additional voucher entitling guests to delicious discounts in the three properties' restaurants and bars. Valid in any Waterfront Hotel of your choice—Waterfront Insular Hotel Davao (WIHD), Waterfront Airport Hotel Casino (WAHC) and Waterfront Cebu City Hotel and Casino (WCCHC), the Indulgence Plus 2004 booklet is irresistibly offered at P14,200.

"The Indulgence Plus is a practical tool for travelers. With the booklet, guests can simply book, rip and indulge—no need to worry about settling bills. Indulgence is designed to ensure our guests of a hassle-free stay each time, whether they're in town for business or pleasure," quips Bernardino, "Vouchers are also transferable upon the endorsement of the bearer, so it also makes a perfect gift."

Indulgence Plus 2004 runs from March 22 to Nov. 30. The limited vouchers are valid only for the period. For inquiries and reservations, call the WHC Manila sales and reservations office at 687-0888, WCCHC at (032) 232-6888, WAHC at (032) 340-4888 and WIHD at (082) 233-2881. Interested parties may avail themselves of the Indulgence Plus 2004 vouchers starting March 22 at the front offices and business centers of the three Waterfront Hotels & Casinos, Manila sales and reservations office and accredited travel agencies. You may also log on to www.waterfronthotels.net for more details.





De-stress at Evercrest Golf Club Resort

A NATURAL masterpiece 72 km south of Manila, Evercrest Golf Club resort is a captivating site 2,000 feet above sea level, overlooking Taal Volcano and Batangas Bay. Choose among our weekday room promos: Weekday Lovers for couples who want a truly romantic and private escapade (P3,210++); Weekday Bliss for those who want ultimate relaxation and relief from work (P2,000 net per person); Weekday Golfer for a complete room and golf package (P3,400 net); or Weekday 2+1 and get a complimentary room once you book at an affordable rate. So pack your things and get ready for a great hideaway! Evercrest anticipates all its guests' needs. For reservations and inquiries, call 733-3822, 733-9955 or 712-9293 to 98. Barely 2 hours from Manila and only 15 minutes away from Tagaytay, Evercrest Golf Club Resort is situated at Km 72 Batulao, Nasugbu, Batangas.

Wednesday buffet at Paparazzi

BENVENUTO!

Take a gastronomic journey through Italy at Shangri-La's Mactan Island Resort's premier Italian restaurant, Paparazzi. Savor the sounds, specialties, ambiance and aroma of a country well renowned for it rich culinary culture.

Every Wednesday, resident Italian Chef Denis Vecchiato concocts a buffet of tasty treats reminiscent of his rustic hometown. Sample to your heart's content delectable portions of lamb, beef and seafood cooked the unique Italian way paired with fresh bread and pizza straight from the wood-burning oven. And if these are not enough, satisfy your craving with a selection of mouth-watering desserts.

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For inquiries, call restaurant reservations at (032) 2310-288 local 51.

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9	BUTTERFLY EFFECT
10	LANGIT MO, KALIGAYAHAN KO
11	GOTHIKA
12	TORQUE

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8	BUTTERFLY EFFECT
9	HIDALGO
10	THE CURSE

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3	50 FIRST DATES
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2	50 FIRST DATES
3	OTSO-OTSO
4	THE GRUDGE 2

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2	TORQUE
3	HIDALGO
4	THE GRUDGE 2
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6	OTSO-OTSO
7	BUTTERFLY EFFECT
8	GOTHIKA

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2	OTSO-OTSO
3	SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE
4	GOTHIKA

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1
LOVE ACTUALLY
11:20 FS/11:50 MF/2:35/
5:20 / 8:05 / 10:25LFS/
10:50 LMF/1:05 END

2
50 FIRST DATES
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MF/2:05/4:15/6:25/8:35/
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2 50 FIRST DATES	2 THE GRUDGE 2	2 50 FIRST DATES 12:30, 2:30, 4:30, 6:30, 8:45	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 2 50 FIRST DATES [illegible] 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30, 11:30	2 THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT
3 THE CURSE	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 3 THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT 1:10, 3:30, 5:50, 8:10, 10:30	Onstage REPERTORY'S DRACULA Mar. 19, 20, 21, 26, 27 & 28	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE 2:15, 5:00, 7:45, 10:30	3 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
4 OTSO-OTSO	4 HIDALGO		4 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30, 11:30	4 LOVE ACTUALLY
	5 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN		GUARANTEED SEATS 5 LOVE ACTUALLY 3:00, 5:45, 8:30, 11:15	5 OTSO-OTSO
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3 (DTS)	TORQUE
4 GOLD (DTS)	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
5 GOLD (DOLBY)	OTSO OTSO
6 GOLD (SDDS)	50 FIRST DATE
7 GOLD (DOLBY)	GOTHIKA
8	OTSO OTSO
9	THE CURSE
10	BUTTERFLY EFFECTS

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5	

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2	LANGIT KO KALIGAYAHAN KO
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5	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
6	50 FIRST DATE

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6	
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3	OTSO OTSO
4 (SDDS)	LOVE ACTUALLY
5	HIDALGO
6 (DOLBY)	50 FIRST DATE
7 (DTS)	PEEP SHOW
8	U BELT
9	DRAGON VS' NINJA

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1	RESERVE
2 (SDDS)	
3 (DTS)	
4 (DOLBY)	
5	

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2	OTSO OTSO
3 (DTS)	PEEP SHOW
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3	THE CURSE
4	50 FIRST DATE

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2	PEEP SHOW
3	50 FIRST DATE
4	OTSO OTSO
5	RESERVE

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4 (SDDS)	50 FIRST DATE
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6	THE CURSE
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4	DRAGON VS' NINJA

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4 (DTS)	TORQUE

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2	50 FIRST DATE
3 (DTS)	OTSO OTSO

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	OTSO OTSO
2 (DTS)	OTSO OTSO
3 (DOLBY)	50 FIRST DATE
4	GHOST HOUSE

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1	OTSO OTSO
2 (DOLBY)	DRAGON VS' NINJA
3 (DTS)	50 FIRST DATE
4	SPIRAL

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(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729

1	OTSO OTSO
2	OTSO OTSO
3 (DOLBY)	GOTHIKA
4 (DTS)	SOMETHING GOTTA GIVE

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795-3320

1	GOTHIKA
2	OTSO OTSO
3	TORQUE

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	MAGIC KITCHEN
2	LANGIT KO KALIGAYAHAN KO
3	NIGHT MARE
4 (DTS)	OTSO OTSO

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	DUPLEX
2	NIGHT MARE
3 (DTS)	50 FIRST DATE
4	LANGIT KO KALIGAYAHAN KO
5	OTSO OTSO

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1	OTSO OTSO
2	

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249.2558

1	DUPLEX
2	OTSO OTSO
3	

Mega Center Mall
(Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283

1	SOMETHING GOTTA GIVE
2	LANGIT KO KALIGAYAHAN KO
3 (DTS)	GHOST HOUSE
4 (DOLBY)	OTSO OTSO

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel 520.8914

1 (DTS)	RESERVE

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	OTSO OTSO
2	GOTHIKA
3	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
4	LOVE ACTUALLY

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1	OTSO OTSO
2	GOOD LAWYERS WIFE

*Movies are subject to change without prior notice

ADVANCED SCREENING THX DOLBY dts SDDS

FESTIVAL CINEMA
Level 4
Festival Supermall
Filinvest - Alabang
Tel. 85035-71 to 72
Schedule subject to change without prior notice

ben stiller drew barrymore

Duplex

NOW SHOWING

ZHOU

F4 joins GMA 7

THE GROUP of Jerry Yan, Vic Zhou, Ken Zhu and Vanness Wu collectively known as "F4," joins GMA's stable of talents.

Starting at 11:30 a.m. this Sunday, the four will be featured in the new show "Meteor Fantasy Paradise," a weekly show in Taiwan, where the group gets up close and personal with their fans.

The show's Philippine version will be hosted by the Sex Bomb Dancers.

Fans will get to see the real person behind the handsome faces and winsome smiles of F4 as they let their guards down during the show, which features two segments called "Meteor Laugh Garden" and "Call Me Mailbox."

In the first segment, fans will reenact classic scenes from F4's television show. In 'Call Me,' F4 will answer fan mail on air.

For its initial telecast this Sunday, "Meteor Fantasy Paradise" will have a sneak preview of "Love Storm," a new chinovela that will premiere on GMA at 4 p.m. on Monday. It stars Ken Zhu and Vic Zhou.

SHOW TIME

What . . .

From page A26

"Hindi Kita Malimot: The Filipino as Romantic."

The concert is open to the public and is presented by Bank of the Philippine Islands and Ayala Land.

Licad says she's looking forward to working with Castillo, whose mother, **JoAnn Faletta**, conducted Licad in a concert in New York last year.

Feedback

FROM **Paul R. Mortel** of Marikina City: "I am glad that Channel 2 has extended 'TV Patrol' to Saturdays. But I believe it is not yet complete because it has no 'TV Patrol' on Sundays. There is exciting news even on weekends, so 'TV Patrol' should also be telecast on Sundays.

"When will GMA-TV follow suit and telecast its main newscast daily? If it does, I suggest the weekend newscasts tap dzBB's **Rowena Salvacion,** who should also be seen on TV."

What we do for love

THE CURRENT film, "Love Actually," can be described as a "sleeper" delight. It charms viewers quietly but steadily, until they find themselves thoroughly taken by its winsome premise.

Thus, the movie appears to start out telling the offbeat story of the British prime minister (**Hugh Grant**) who falls in love with his secretary. Soon enough, however, other improbable love stories enter the picture, providing both contrast and affirmation, until the full intent of the production triumphantly asserts itself:

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

"Love Actually" is—*actually*—not about a few odd romances, but about Love itself, and the different ways that people try to have and keep it in their lives.

Tall order? Well, the film is often up to it, and director **Richard Corliss** should be enthusiastically lauded for his cheek, gumption and daring.

The diverse romances include an incipient attraction between the two naked stars of a porn production. This story is rendered both shocking and affecting by the fact that they perform for the camera in such a sexually graphic manner, while being emotionally shy.

Is this believable? Would two sex machines really be so innocent about love? Perhaps not—but the contrast is strangely moving, all the same.

Even more improbable is the vignette about a nine-year-old boy who confides to his stepdad that he's suffering the exquisite pain of rejection because he's passionately in love with a "perfect" classmate!

This isn't a case of puppy love, but a truly great passion that plunges the boy to the pits of romantic despair—and his stepfather is secretly envious of him for being able to feel so deeply.

Again, can puppy love be such a grand passion? Surely not—but this episode's fanciful conceit expands our appreciation of the power of love to transform, posses and inspire any lover, young or old, to the very core of his being.

This film's insights about love go beyond realism, and thus could turn off some actuality-oriented people. Others, however, would agree that the heart is ruled, not by reality, but by its endless, inexplicable and even contradictory possibilities.

Thus, "Love Actually" is a prodigious albeit fanciful tribute to the power of love to thrill and chill, wound and heal, ennoble and betray. Both precious and perverse, it can be the major impulse in our lives, if we let it.

And, if we don't, and opt for safety from "romantic injury," we could miss out on the very essence of life itself. So, go for it, folks, and define yourself by the love you have to share, despite all the risks involved.

'TVM' at Republic of Malate

A SPECIAL one-weekend run of "The Vagina Monologues" at Republic of Malate from March 18 to 20 launches the New Voice Company's 10th anniversary celebrations this year.

The play will be performed by **Jaya, Jenny Jamora** and **Tami Monsod. Rito Asilo** directs. Call 896-6695 or 891-9999.

New season

THE SIXTH season of Studio 23's "Just Shoot Me" starts telecasting on Sunday, March 21, at 8:30 p.m. The sitcom again plunges viewers into the hectic world of one of the world's biggest fashion magazines.

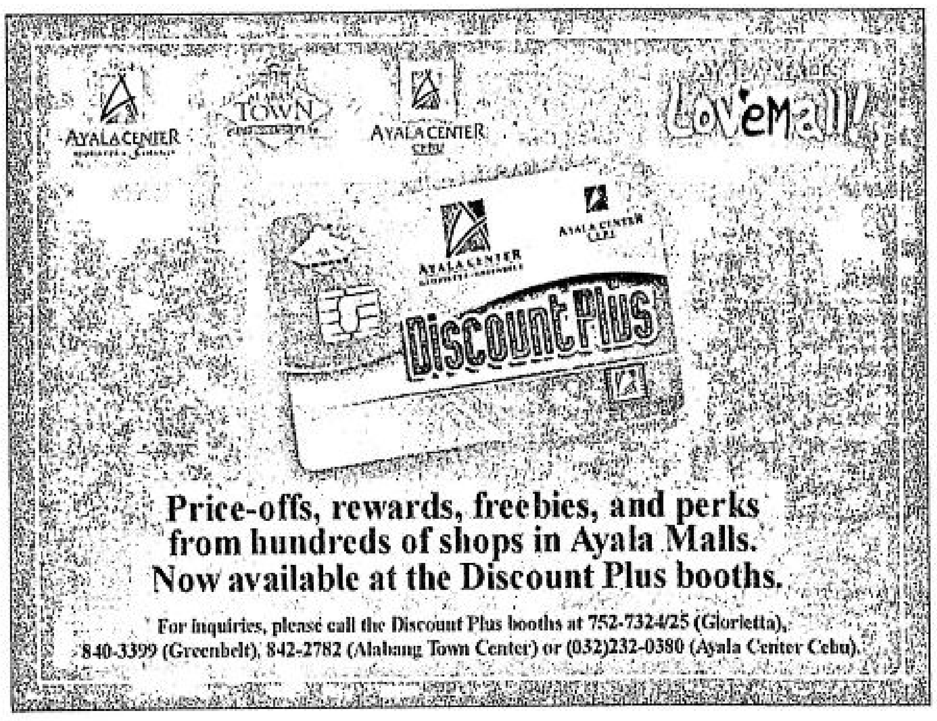
Zany characters are played by **George Segal, Laura San Giacomo, David Spade,** and **Wendie Malick.**

Cecile Licad

INTERNATIONALLY-ACCLAIMED concert pianist and classical recording artist **Cecile Licad** will perform in the anniversary celebration of Ayala Corp. and Ayala Foundation at 7:30 p.m. on March 23 at Tower One, Ayala Triangle along Ayala Ave. in Makati.

Licad is soloist in Ravel's Concerto in G with the San Miguel Philharmonic under the baton of incoming PPO music director **Eugene F. Castillo.** Prof. Ryan Cayabyab will also be featured in the concert, titled

WHAT/ A25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ALABANG TOWN CENTER
AYALA CENTER CEBU
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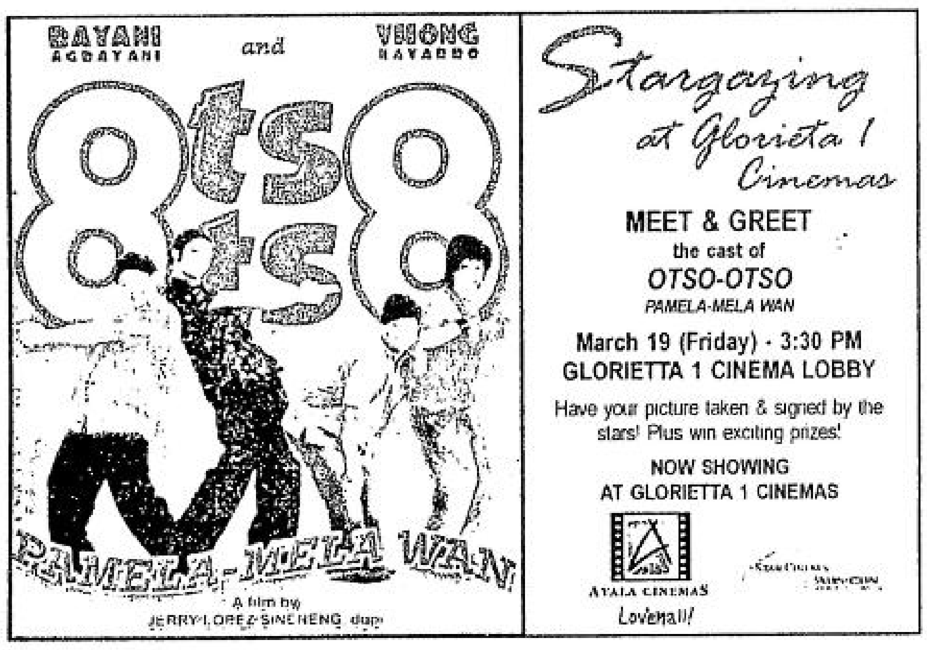
Now available at the Discount Plus booths.
For inquiries, please call the Discount Plus booths at 752-7324/25 (Glorietta), 840-3399 (Greenbelt), 842-2782 (Alabang Town Center) or (032)232-0380 (Ayala Center Cebu).

If you have the power to resurrect your loved one... would you do it?
Now Showing
at
Robinsons Movieworld
screening time:
GALLERIA:
C-3 11:55, 2:05, 4:15, 6:25, 8:35, 10:25
ERMITA:
Cinema 6 11:35, 2:05, 4:35, 7:05, 9:40
METRO EAST:
Cinema 7 10:50, 1:25, 4:00, 6:35, 9:10
MTRCB Rating: R-13
ASHTON KUTCHER AMY SMART
The Butterfly Effect
A TERRIFYING JOURNEY INTO THE UNKNOWN.
FROM THE DIRECTOR OF FINAL DESTINATION 2
For screening schedules, pls. call our MOVIE ACCESS no: 835-5555 or visit us: www.robinsonsmovieworld.com
MOVIEWORLD


BAYANI AGBAYANI and VHONG NAVARRO
OTSO OTSO
PAMELA-MELA WAN
A film by JERRY LOPEZ SINENENG
Stargazing at Glorietta 1 Cinemas
MEET & GREET
the cast of
OTSO-OTSO
PAMELA-MELA WAN
March 19 (Friday) - 3:30 PM
GLORIETTA 1 CINEMA LOBBY
Have your picture taken & signed by the stars! Plus win exciting prizes!
NOW SHOWING
AT GLORIETTA 1 CINEMAS
AYALA CINEMAS
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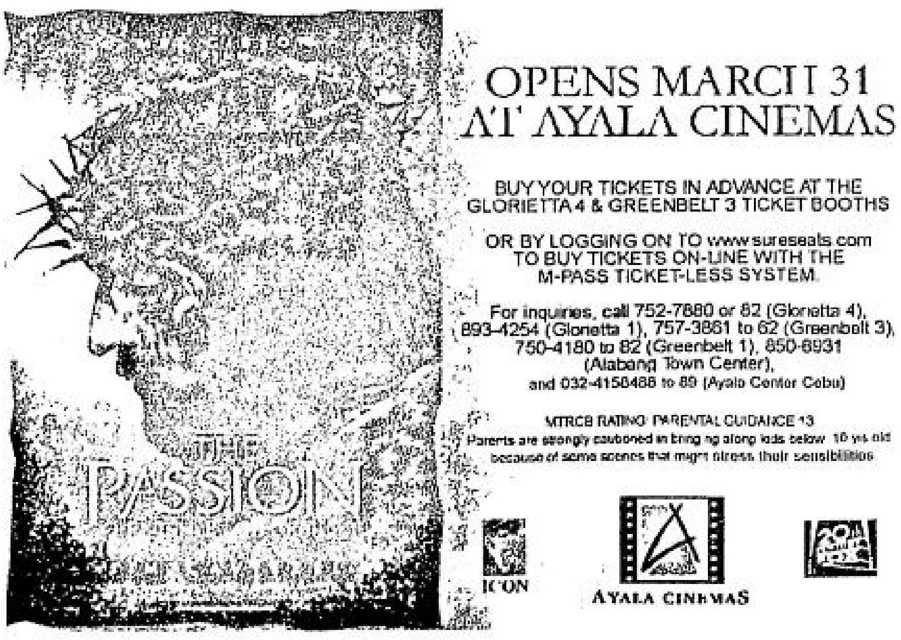
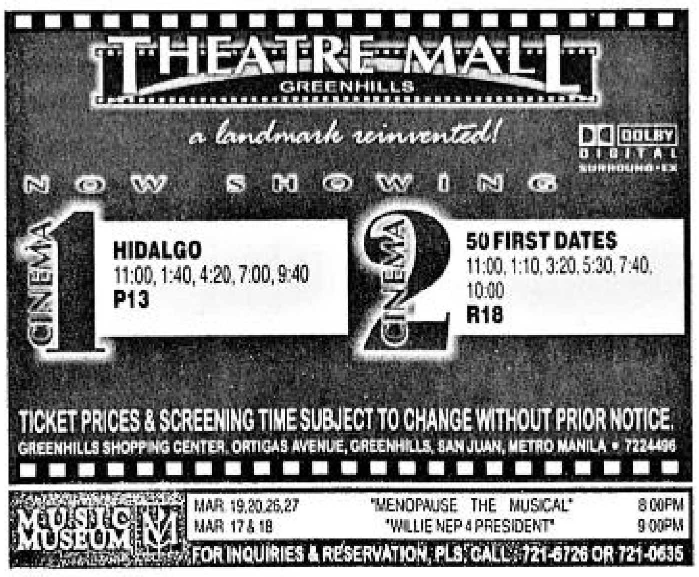

THE PASSION
OPENS MARCH 31
AT AYALA CINEMAS
BUY YOUR TICKETS IN ADVANCE AT THE GLORIETTA 4 & GREENBELT 3 TICKET BOOTHS
OR BY LOGGING ON TO www.sureseats.com TO BUY TICKETS ON-LINE WITH THE M-PASS TICKET-LESS SYSTEM.
For inquiries, call 752-7880 or 82 (Glorietta 4), 893-4254 (Glorietta 1), 757-3861 to 62 (Greenbelt 3), 750-4180 to 82 (Greenbelt 1), 850-6931 (Alabang Town Center), and 032-4158488 to 89 (Ayala Center Cebu)
MTRCB RATING: PARENTAL GUIDANCE 13
Parents are strongly cautioned in bringing along kids below 10 yrs old because of some scenes that might stress their sensibilities
ICON
AYALA CINEMAS

NOW SHOWING EXCLUSIVELY AT
GLORIETTA 4 & GREENBELT 1 CINEMAS
AYALA CINEMAS
COLUMBIA PICTURES
Tommy Lee Jones Cate Blanchett
THE MISSING
How far would you go, how much would you sacrifice to get back what you have lost?
From Ron Howard and Brian Grazer, the Oscar-winning director-producer team of A BEAUTIFUL MIND comes THE MISSING, an action-filled suspense thriller and a powerful drama of love, forgiveness and redemption.
"Powerful and provocative. The Missing is another masterful production from one of the industry's best directors and two of its best actors."
-- Paul Clinton, CNN
FOR SCREENING SCHEDULE, PLS. CALL 729-777
MTRCB Rating: Restricted 13 (R-13)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CINEMA 1
HIDALGO
11:00, 1:40, 4:20, 7:00, 9:40
P13
CINEMA 2
50 FIRST DATES
11:00, 1:10, 3:20, 5:30, 7:40, 10:00
R18
TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.
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A film that will make you laugh.
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A film that will remind you that "LOVE IS ALL AROUND."
Somewhere in this movie, you'll find the love of your life.
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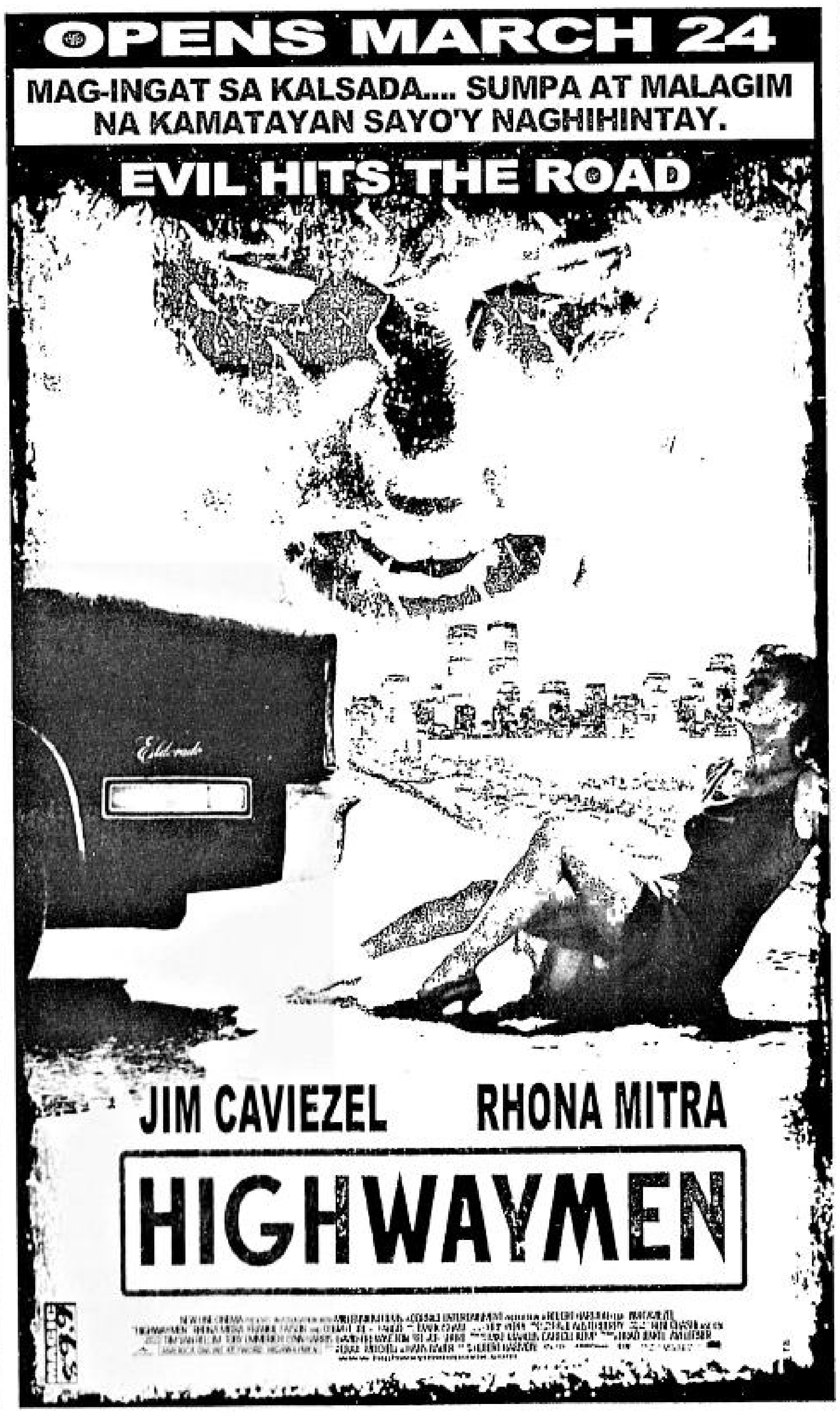
love actually
Very romantic. Very comedy.


OPENS MARCH 24
MAG-INGAT SA KALSADA.... SUMPA AT MALAGIM NA KAMATAYAN SAYO'Y NAGHIHINTAY.
EVIL HITS THE ROAD
JIM CAVIEZEL RHONA MITRA
HIGHWAYMEN

D'Sound . . .

From page A28

'Small challenges, small payoff; big challenges, big payoff!"

He says that the youngsters remind him of Hotdog when they first started in the '70s.

"I wouldn't waste my time with a group that's ordinary or generic. They're really outstanding. They know that, but the nice thing is, they're not swellheaded. They're the only group with four gigs a week in the prime watering holes—Strumms, Virgin Café, Hard Rock Café, and Suburbia—bands who've been together for 10 years cannot even do that," Dennis notes.

He acknowledges that the Dimsum members also provide important input on his compositions, and will be getting a chance to fully control the songwriting duties when the proper time comes: "I'm taking them through songwriting 101. Creatively, they contribute. We bring them to the studio; they suggest things. Eventually, they'll be writing their own stuff."

Dennis reminisces about the time when Filipino music ruled the airwaves a few decades back. The writer of such radio hits as "Annie Batungbakal" and "Bongga Ka 'Day" misses the muse that inspired the local music scene greatly.

"OPM was the king. Imported music was second-class. Now there's no incentive to be creative, *eh*."

In Dimsum, Dennis hopes to jumpstart the stalled development of local talent. He also hopes to see through the rebirth of Original Pilipino Music, which as Hotdog Band, he has helped nurture into Pinoy Pop immortality.

Araneta Center
ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX

Ali 3	HIDALGO
Ali 4	50 FIRST DATES
Ali 5	TORQUE
Ali 6	THE CURSE
Ali 7	OTSO OTSO

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MAR 21	PBA: SAN MIGUEL VS. PUREFOODS
MAR 23	NCA7-COCK DERBY
MAR 24	PBA: GINEBRA VS. STA. LUCIA
MAR 25	NCA 7-COCK DERBY
MAR 27	CRAZY RIGHT NOW WITH VANESS
MAR 28	PBA: SHELL VS. GINEBRA
MAR 31	NCA 7-COCK DERBY
APRIL 2	ENRIQUE IGLESIAS -7 ASIA WORLD TOUR

For tickets, call TicketNet at 911-5555

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA

EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY / LEGEND OF CROCODILE

QUEZON CITY

ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	BALAT SIBUYAS / AMBISYOSA
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR

NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA

A	OTSO OTSO
B	PEEP SHOW
C	

MANDALUYONG CITY

SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION

CAINTA RIZAL

STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	MILAN
CINEMA-2	LANGIT MO KALIGAYAHAN KO
CINEMA-3	DRAGON VS NINJA
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	CARMEN
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	KUYA
CINEMA-6	U-BELT
CINEMA-7	COLD MOUNTAIN
CINEMA-8	ANNIE B
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	TORQUE
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	HIDALGO
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
CINEMA-12	LOVE ACTUALLY
CINEMA-14	GOTHIKA
CINEMA-15	GRUDGE 2

LORES

CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT

NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN

(LAS PIÑAS)	RUNAWAY JURY
CINEMA-1	ANNIE B
CINEMA-2	COLD MOUNTAIN
CINEMA-4	TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE

UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL

(PARAÑAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

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E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave. (C-5) Quezon City
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX
For inquiries, call:
687-6963 • 687-6972
RESERVED SEATING
MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

1	LOVE ACTUALLY	11:40, 2:30, 5:20, 8:10, 11:00	R-18
2	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN	11:00, 1:10, 3:20, 5:30, 7:40, 9:50	GP
3	50 FIRST DATES	11:35, 1:50, 4:05, 6:20, 8:35, 10:50	PG-13
4	BUTTERFLY EFFECTS	12:30, 3:05, 5:40, 8:15, 10:50	R-13

FALL IN LOVE OVER & OVER AGAIN
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MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13 Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult.
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When your girlfriend has amnesia you have to win her over...every single day.
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MTRCB ▶ PG-13
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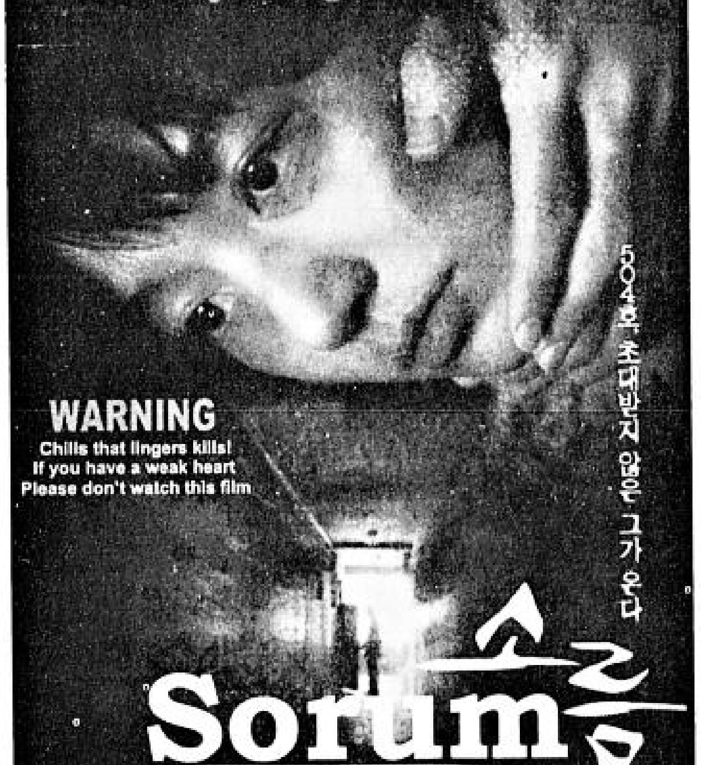
In the tradition of last year's most horryfying films...
"JU-ON The Grudge" and "JEEPERS CREEPERS 2"
Comes this most spine chilling and darkest horror masterpiece


504호 초대받지 않은 그가 온다

WARNING
Chills that lingers kills!
If you have a weak heart
Please don't watch this film

Sorum
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KIM MYEONG-MIN GI JU-BONG JANG JIN-YEONG(a)
DIRECTED BY: YUN JONG-CHAN
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Hindi ka na magigising sa bangungot na 'to!
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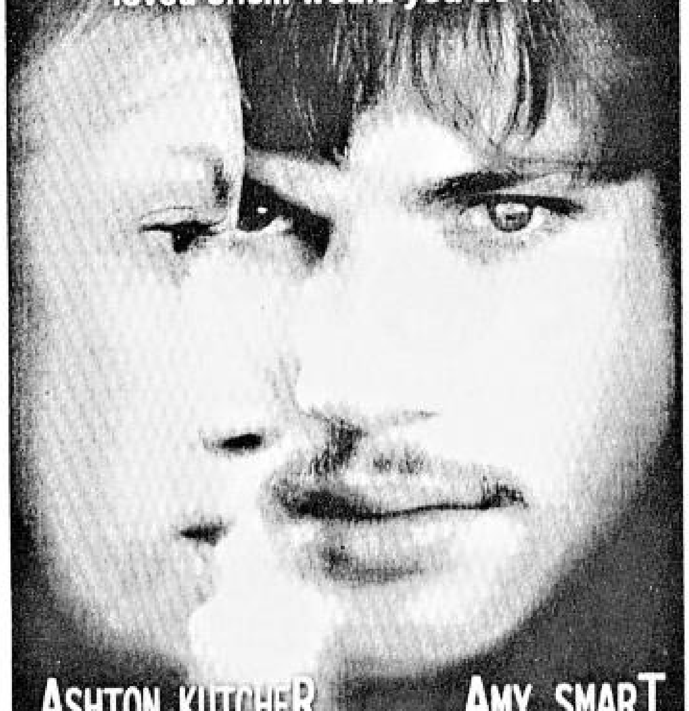

ASHTON KUTCHER AMY SMART
The Butterfly Effect
A TERRIFYING JOURNEY INTO THE UNKNOWN.
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NOW SHOWING

GALLERIA 632-9115 to 16 / 687-0593

Cinema	Movie	Times
CINEMA 1 THX	HIDALGO	12:00, 2:45, 5:30, 8:15, 10:25
2	TORQUE	10:50, 1:00, 3:10, 4:45
3	BUTTERFLY EFFECT	11:55, 2:05, 4:15, 6:25, 8:35, 10:25
4	50 FIRST DATES	10:25, 12:40, 2:55, 5:10, 7:25, 9:40
5	THE GRUDGE 2	10:40, 12:40, 2:40, 4:40, 6:40, 8:40, 10:25
6	OTSO-OTSO	10:35, 12:50, 3:05, 5:20, 7:35, 9:50
7	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN	11:55, 2:05, 4:15, 6:25, 8:35, 10:25
8	LOVE ACTUALLY	10:20, 1:10, 4:00, 6:50, 9:40
9	THE CURSE	10:40, 12:40, 2:40, 4:40, 6:40, 8:40, 10:25
10	SORUM	11:00, 1:40, 4:20, 7:00, 9:40

MATINEE: Monday to Friday/ 10 am-4pm except holidays
Matinee Price: P100 THX cinema / P80 for one level cinemas
Regular Price: P130 THX / P95/65 for two levels cinemas / P95 for one level cinemas

ERMITA 526-7185 / 536-7809 to 12

Cinema	Movie	Times
1	50 FIRST DATES	10:15, 12:30, 2:45, 5:00, 7:15, 9:40
2	THE GRUDGE 2	11:15, 1:05, 2:55, 4:45, 6:35, 8.25, 10:00
3	HIDALGO	11:00, 1:35, 4:10, 6:45, 9:40
4	THE CURSE	11:15, 1:05, 2:55, 4:45, 6:35, 8:25, 10:00
5	OTSO-OTSO	10:15, 12:30, 2:45, 5:00, 7:15, 9:40
6	BUTTERFLY EFFECT	11:35, 2:30, 5:10, 7:40, 10:00
7	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN	10:35, 12:45, 2:55, 5:05, 7:15, 9:40

Big R Supercenter METRO EAST 682-8193/99 / 682-8280

Cinema	Movie	Times
1	THE CURSE	11:50, 2:10, 4:30, 6:50, 9:10
2	50 FIRST DATES	10:50, 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:50, 9:10
3	LOVE ACTUALLY	12:30, 3:20, 6:10, 9:00
4	HIDALGO	10:20, 12:00, 3:00, 6:00, 9:00
5	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN	10:50, 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:50, 9:00
6	THE GRUDGE 2	10:50, 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:50, 9:00
7	BUTTERFLY EFFECT	10:50, 1:25, 4:00, 6:35, 9:10
8	OTSO-OTSO	11:00, 1:30, 4:00, 6:30, 9:00

Big R Supercenter NOVALICHES / FAIRVIEW 935-3229 / 31

Cinema	Movie	Times
1	THE GRUDGE 2	11:25, 1:15, 3:05, 4:55, 6:45, 8:35
2	OTSO-OTSO	11:45, 1:55, 4:05, 6:15, 8:30
3	BUTTERFLY EFFECT	11:20, 1:35, 3:50, 6:05, 8:30
4	THE CURSE	11:25, 1:15, 3:05, 4:55, 6:45, 8:35
5	HIDALGO	10:40, 12:05, 2:50, 5:35, 8:30
6	TORQUE	10:25, 12:15, 2:05, 3:55, 5:45, 7:35, 9:00
7	50 FIRST DATES	11:25, 1:15, 3:05, 4:55, 6:45, 8:35
8	LOVE ACTUALLY	11:10, 1:30, 3:50, 6:10, 8:30

Citisquare MALABON 288-0985/2575

1	HIDALGO
2	OTSO-OTSO
3	50 FIRST DATES
4	CARMEN

big Supercenter CAINTA 240-4661

1	50 FIRST DATES
2	OTSO-OTSO
3	LOVE ACTUALLY
4	HIDALGO

Big R Supercenter STA. ROSA Laguna (049)837-0907

1	50 FIRST DATES
2	LANGIT MO KALIGAYAHAN KO
3	DRAGON VS. NINJA
4	CARMEN
5	OTSO-OTSO

Big R Supercenter LIPA 757-3664 / 312-5870

1	THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE
2	OTSO-OTSO
3	DUPLEX
4	LOVE ACTUALLY
5	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN

Big R Supercenter DASMARIÑAS 852-2125

1	LANGIT MO KALIGAYAHAN KO
2	WATER DEMON
3	TORQUE
4	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
5	OTSO-OTSO

Big R Supercenter STARMILLS San Fernando Pampanga 875-1927 / 961-5270

1	CARMEN
2	DRAGON VS. NINJA
3	OTSO-OTSO
4	SKY OF LOVE
5	TORQUE
6	HIDALGO

IMUS 471-8188 / 875-5858

1	HIDALGO
2	50 FIRST DATES
3	THE CURSE
4 DTS	BUTTERFLY EFFECT
5	OTSO-OTSO
6	THE GRUDGE 2

BACOLOD 441-0458/59

1	WATER DEMON
2	OTSO-OTSO
3	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
4	GHOST HOUSE
5	21 GRAMS
6	SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE

ILOILO 336-8070/78

1	DUPLEX
2	RUNAWAY JURY
3	THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE
4	OTSO-OTSO
5	CARMEN
6	DRAGON VS. NINJA

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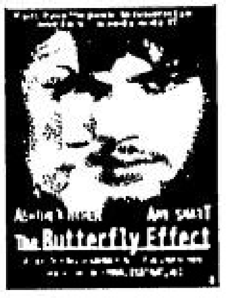

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ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Louie C. Camino

D'Sound singer cuts song with unknown local band

DIMSUM BAND'S Max Coquia, Abbey Tereza and Khay Ebcas (vocals), Ibey Jaber (bass), Allen Policarpio (drums), Ricky Salvo (keyboards), Ralph "Ping" Bates (guitar) whip up inspired renditions and medleys of classic and contemporary R&B songs.

Simone does deed for free

By Oliver M. Pulumbarit
Contributor

WHEN THE popular Norwegian band D'Sound blew into town recently for a private show, its frontwoman Simone was attracted by the sound the members of a band was creating during a karaoke session in a party.

The prospect of jamming with the unknown band composed of seven people in their early 20s proved to be irresistible to Simone that she even agreed to sing in the group's first album not even for a song. She simply did it for the honor of performing with the group on one cut of an album that has yet to find a record company that would release it.

Having the Norwegian goddess perform on the title cut of their debut album "Heaven Sent" is one of the career highlights that members of the band Dimsum talked about in this interview, held an hour before they went on stage during their regular gig at Hard Rock Cafe in Makati to perform three energetic 45-minute sets.

On stage, vocalists Abbey Tereza and Max Coquia, bassist Ibey Jaber, drummer Allen Policarpio, keyboardist Ricky Salvo, guitarist Ralph "Ping" Bates and backup singer Khay Ebcas cohesively whipped up inspired renditions and medleys of classic and contemporary R&B songs.

"We're very excited. We're honored because D'Sound is one of our favorites. That song, 'Heaven Sent,' is a remake, originally interpreted by one of our idols, Ella Mae Sayson. It was written by Sir Dennis and won third place in the best song category in the 2001 Metropop. It was planned that Dimsum was going to do a remake. Unexpectedly, Simone agreed to do it with us," reveals Abbey.

SIMONE of D'Sound's recorded the title cut of Dimsum's album.

The collaboration may prove helpful when their album is released, according to Ibey: "That's a big break for us, 'cause D'Sound is an internationally known group. They're cool. Maybe the market will pay attention to us when they hear about Simone. She added a touch of jazz to Abbey's R&B style."

Defining the decade

That Dimsum has achieved so much in the four months that the group has been together speaks of the band's collective creativity in the realm of pop music. That the man who has inspired this creativity is a demi-god in Pinoy pop music himself is equally jaw-dropping as the band's awesome sound.

Both the band and their guru, songwriter-bassist-record producer-jingle maker-advertising creative guru Dennis Garcia of Hotdog Band, are focusing their creative energies to cooking up an all-new music venture that would hopefully define the music of this decade the way Rage Band owned the '80s, and in the manner that Hotdog Band claimed the '70s.

The band has yet to make it big in the live entertainment scene and in local pop recording. But it is easy to understand why Simone, who belongs to one of the world's top pop groups, would be enticed to get involved in Dimsum's music.

Peppy, kinetic

The group has become the popular attraction in four hot spots in Metro Manila: Hard Rock Café, Strumms, Suburbia and Virgin Café. This gives them four solid nights of paid gigs when more seasoned bands would consider themselves lucky to have one show a week. This is also an indication that their music, which is basically R&B and retro soul, has attracted a groupie following that might soon develop into mass hysteria.

The group was a peppy, kinetic presence on stage. Who knew the big guy, Max, had both the pipes and the happening dance moves? Dimsum's upbeat showmanship contradicted the rather shy and subdued demeanor of most of its band members during the interview, prior to the show proper.

"When we were starting, people kept asking, 'Why Dimsum?' We keep telling them, 'Because we're appetizing'. Sir Dennis is actually behind everything," says Max, referring to the band's manager, Dennis Garcia, Hotdog Band honcho-songwriter-advertising creative guru-record producer.

Max claims that a rapport had always been present since he, Abbey and Ibey previously worked together in another band.

"We were all part of different bands. *Parang ginataang halo-halo*," claims Abbey.

Between the band members, their influences comprise a long, diverse list of accomplished figures in music: Stevie Wonder, Lauryn Hill, Incognito, Beyonce Knowles, Whitney Houston, South Border, John Bonham of Led Zeppelin (Allen's fave), and many others. Some of the covers they perform during gigs include songs by Luther Vandross, Janet Jackson and Des'ree. These easily connect with audiences, allowing Dimsum's singers to cut loose with their own memorable versions.

"We divide the lineup evenly, as much as possible, to avoid stressing our vocal chords. But if people would request for some songs, either for Max or for me, we'd still do them *naman*," Abbey enthuses.

Big challenges, big payoff

Each of them has devoted complete commitment to the job, confident that this new endeavor will make people pay attention.

Khay echoes her friends' confidence, adding, "For now, I hope we'll come up with a really good album that will create a new taste for listeners." Dimsum's steadily growing following has been an interesting part of the deal as well, as Max jokingly puts it: "As far as the fan base or groupies are concerned, it increased when Ping joined us. He doesn't sing, he just plays his guitar, but it's enough to attract all the *matronas!*"

The band's musical director, Wylo Lopez, has been there since the band's inception: "It was Dennis' vision to form the band. He wants Dimsum to be the best band in the land. Even when it was only one month old, the band already had gigs. They're very disciplined and passionate about their craft."

Dennis, who recently gave up a high-paying job as Viva's chief creative officer, says, "I let go of a big salary to earn…two thousand a night! Because I believe in the band, and I wanna help Philippine music. I'm obsessed with showing how good we Filipinos are. My motto has always been,

D'SOUND/ A27

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BUTTERFLY EFFECT R13 12:50, 3;10, 5:30, 7;50, 10:10	THE CURSE R18 12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00	50 FIRST DATES PG13 11:20, 1:30, 3:40, 5:50, 8:00, 10:20

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AGCAOILI

Network suspends starlet

ABS-CBN, and not the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board, suspended Viva Hot Babe Asia Agcaoili for 20 days after she "accidentally" exposed a breast last week during an opening dance number in the noontime variety show "MTB Ang Saya Saya."

This clarification comes after an erroneous headline in INQUIRER Entertainment's March 17 issue, saying it was the MTRCB, which suspended the bold starlet. But it was the MTRCB that filed a complaint against Agcaoili's breast baring on the March 9 episode of "MTB."

Agcaoili's suspension started yesterday despite her apology on the news program "TV Patrol" last week.

Viva Hot Babe Kristine Jaca's photo, instead of Agcaoli's picture, appeared on yesterday's issue.

Jaca, 22, was first featured in Director Tikoy Aguiluz's "Tatarin" before she became a Hot Babe, her manager Annie Ayroso said.

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Foreign debt seen swelling to $59.4B

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINES' total foreign debt burden is projected to swell to $59.4 billion by year's end from the end-2003 level of $56.7 billion on additional public sector borrowings.

Based on official government documents, the estimated debt level this year would account for 64.1 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP), or the total amount of goods and services produced by the economy. However, the projected ratio is an improvement from the 67.1 percent estimated for 2003 and 72.7 percent in 2002.

The government's rising debt burden has prompted some sectors, including leading presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr., to call for a restructuring of some government liabilities.

Most of the fresh borrowings this year are expected to come from the public sector. The national government alone has set $1.8 billion in external funding requirements, of which $500 million has recently been offered to the global bond market, while the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas may tap another $500 million for refinancing activities.

Other sovereign bond offerings are expected after the May presidential elections.

A BSP official explained that the government sets a ceiling for foreign borrowings each year in compliance with the Foreign Borrowing Act, which restricts the budget for debt servicing to 25 percent of all foreign exchange receipts such as exports, remittances and services.

The government thus caps foreign borrowings to better determine inflows and outflows of foreign exchange and prevent a bunching up of maturities over the years.

The country's $59.4-billion debt stock projected for this year is equivalent to 66.1 percent of earnings from the export of goods and services, up from the 50.8 percent estimated for end-2003.

On the other hand, the documents indicated that debt servicing this year would be capped at $8.2 billion, of which $2.8 billion would be interest payments.

The country's ballooning debt burden was a continuing concern for most investors especially since the bulk consisted of government liabilities, but the BSP official said the country really had no choice but to embark on new borrowings to make both ends meet.

"Revenues are slow. The government's capital expenditures are now almost zero," the official said.

But the BSP official noted that despite the country's rising debt, its servicing ratios were improving. He noted that from January to November last year, the servicing of principal and interest accounted for 16.4 percent of total receipts compared to 16.7 percent a year ago.

The BSP has yet to release the full-year 2003 report on the country's external debt.

Of the country's $56.34-billion external debt stock as of end-September, borrowings from official creditors such as international multilateral institutions, foreign governments and their agencies accounted for 45 percent.

FOREIGN/B3

Malacañang optimistic CalPERS is staying

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

MALACAÑANG is optimistic that the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS) would soon appreciate the "good long-term" prospects of the Philippines when it decides next month on whether to keep its investments in the country.

In a press briefing, presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said the country's fundamentals were strong and that these would become even stronger after the elections.

CalPERS, an American investment fund closely tracked by global investors, has given the Philippines another reprieve before its board would decide whether to withdraw its investments from the Philippines after the the country has logged in poor investment ratings in the last three years.

The CalPERS board gave the Philippines up to next month to discuss with its consultant, Wilshire Consulting, the inclusion of more recent data that would give the Philippines a better rating in its review.

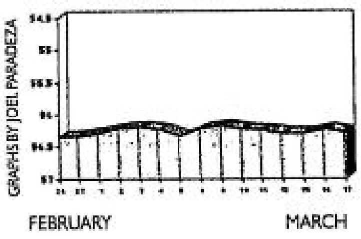
Bunye noted that some foreign banks, notably Standard Chartered, have noted the "good, long-term prospects of the Philippines."

"They believe that whatever is happening now is only temporary and the peso will recover after the elections," Bunye said.

Bunye said that should CalPERS choose to withdraw its money from the Philippines, "that's their decision."

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



GRAPHS BY JOEL PARADEZA

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P 56.285 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., March 17, 2004

¥ 108.27 = $ 1

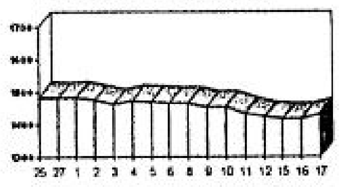
As of 5 p.m., March 17, 2004

GOLD: $399.60-400.10

per ounce Hong Kong, March 16, 2004

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Stocks cut 8-day drop

STOCKS ended an eight-day losing streak yesterday as players tracked a rise on Wall Street after the US Federal Reserve kept interest rates unchanged.

Analysts said bargain hunters snapped up blue chips led by telecom leader PLDT and second-ranked Globe Telecom.

"A technical relief rally occurred today spurred by Wall Street's ascent," said online stock brokerage 2TradeAsia.com in a client report. "The US Fed's hint it would maintain its patience in raising interest rates provided enough courage for brave pickers to position in stocks that have corrected to attractive levels."

The main index closed 12.97 points or 0.91 percent higher at 1,431.64 points. It is down 0.74 percent so far this year. Value turnover rose to P527.49 million from Tuesday's P408.16 million, as gainers beat losers 27 to 18. *Reuters*

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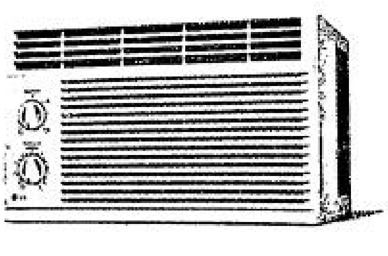

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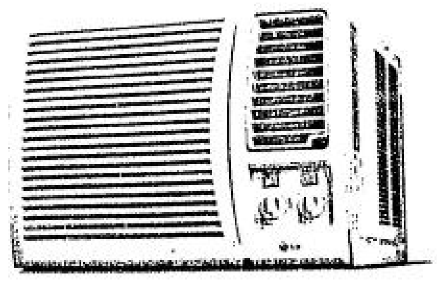

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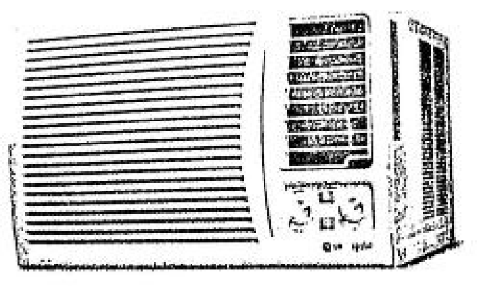

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Court rules against BIR on cigarette tax regulation

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue's efforts to increase collection took another beating after the Makati City Regional Trial Court issued an injunction on a revenue ruling that raised taxes on new cigarette brands.

Makati RTC Judge Romeo Barza issued an injunction on the implementation of RR 22-2003 following a petition filed by cigarette firm British American Tobacco (BAT). BAT imports and sells the Lucky Strike brand, which is considered a new brand.

This is the second court ruling against the revenue regulation. Last month, the Mandaue City Regional Trial Court declared as unconstitutional the said ruling, saying it was against the principle of equity in taxation. The BIR has filed a motion to lift the Mandaue court ruling.

These rulings hamper efforts of the BIR to raise more taxes from the cigarette sector.

"We will definitely make an appeal because the ruling will affect the BIR's tax collection efforts," said Revenue Deputy Commissioner Kim Henares.

RR 22-2003 sets a higher tax bracket for new cigarette brands or those that have been introduced in the market only after 1996, whose prices reach certain levels.

Affected brands include Astro and Memphis of La Suerte Cigar and Cigarette Factory, and Lucky Strike of BAT.

A market survey conducted by the BIR showed that current net retail prices of Lucky Strike, Astro and Memphis have increased and should therefore fall under a higher tax bracket.

The revenue regulation jacked up the prices of Lucky Strike to P13.44 from P8.96 per pack. While paying the additional tax of P4.48 under protest, BAT said in its petition that the tax would be detrimental to its business as it had already been suffering from net losses in the past two years.

"The petitioner (BAT) cannot possibly afford to continuously absorb the additional excise tax considering the financial predicament it is presently facing. The alternative of passing on the additional tax to consumers would be disastrous to its business as it will be losing market share to competitors," said Barza in the court ruling.

Manufacturers of new cigarette brands tag as unfair the revenue ruling because it excludes old cigarette brands. La Suerte said the increase in taxes on Astro and Memphis made them more expensive than counterpart brands, thereby making them lose market share.

BPI sees 5-10% profit growth

BANK of the Philippine Islands, the country's second biggest bank, is targeting a 5- to 10-percent rise in profit this year, from P5.7 billion in 2003.

In an interview, BPI executive vice president Aurelio Montinola said 2003 was a good year for the bank, whose earnings amounted to P5.2-P5.3 billion in previous years.

In 2003, BPI posted a 10-percent growth in profit on improved revenue and lower operating cost.

Montinola, who is also president of BPI Family Bank, said the elections meant increased consumer spending, "so it would be business as usual for us."

BPI enjoys a significant presence in corporate finance, asset and fund management, securities distribution and insurance.

Doris C. Dumlao

Mad life crisis

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

AND so the Comelec disqualified a certain Eddie Gil from the presidential race. I'm not sure if it's due to Gil's undergoing a midlife crisis, but it will likely bring on another paralyzing electricity crisis.

Let me explain, Pipen. Gil is the so-called George Soros of the Philippines. With his disqualification, how in heaven's name do we now repay all of the national debts?

At least Gil is the only presidential crackpot who is, er, crazy enough to promise to repay those trillions of pesos in government debts—and on his own, at that!

Thus you can bet your sweet camote that our debts will hound us soon. Nobody, for instance, will lend to us to build new power plants. As a result, we are facing another power crisis.

* * *

THAT hours-long "brownouts" are coming our way in just a few years, is already as real as the multimillion Jose Pidal bank accounts.

Look, they are already suffering from long brownouts in the Visayas, particularly in the Panay area, and in some parts of Mindanao.

And recent history—i.e. Tita Cory administration in the early '90s—showed us that power shortage, meaning, brownouts, made a lot of us mad, and it made life for a lot of us poor even harder.

For it results in a sharp drop in the GNP, or what economists call "negative growth," which we down here simply know as ... well, we are sinking.

* * *

WE are not building new power plants, and building them, precisely, or at least packaging the deals to build them, we should have done yesterday.

Today it may be too late, according to Federico Lopez, president of First Generation Holdings Corp., which belongs to the Lopez group.

Being part of the Lopez group makes Piki, which is how this US-educated young man is known in the family, a suspect in sounding the alarm on an impending crisis.

You know—Meralco and such! The Lopez group is deep into the power business. Its Meralco seems to be the target of the Supreme Court. It cannot win a case there.

* * *

THUS, Piki's assessment may sound to many of us just like a lot of vested interest. Of course he warns us about a crisis, so that his family can get what they want. Something like that!

At the very least, he may sound like an alarmist, even perhaps to the so-called "experts" in the government. His warning may fall on deaf ears.

But here's what I gathered. This young man is said to be the most cerebral in the fourth generation of this family of big-time business leaders.

Piki is considered as one of the real experts in the electricity business. To him, really, getting us aware of the impending crisis is now more of a personal crusade. And I am not saying this just because he sent me a brand new helicopter!

* * *

IN the end, anyway, who else will warn us about any major problem if not those from within? It's not us if we can always rely on the Sex Bomb Dancers or something.

It's clear that we need some $2-$3 billion in the next five years to build new power plants just to cut the power crisis short—and not even, mind you, to avoid it.

Where do we get that kind of money? Not from the government, that is for sure! The government cannot borrow the money to build the power plants.

We know that Eddie Gil is just crazy. We have no way to clearing up our debts in the next several generations. For the government, it will become hard to get more loans.

Former Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho thinks that the debt problem is much worse than what we think, exempting the politicos, of course, who never bother to think at all.

***

ANYWAY, Camacho points at the hundred billion of pesos in yearly subsidy, which this cute administration carries out in the power sector just for Gloriaetta to look good.

Two years ago, at the height of the PPA issue, Gloriaetta pegged the PPA to 40 centavos per kilowatthour, which meant a cut in our electricity bill.

Unknown to the public, however, the government must still pay for the cut. For Gloriaetta to smell good, Napocor must take a bath in a P140-billion loss this year alone.

The cost adds to the budget deficit of P200 billion. In other words, the subsidy is a hidden cost. It is still there. And you hide it all because of politics.

***

THAT thing cannot go on forever, because today, with our budget deficit and with the losses of Napocor, the total public sector debt is already 93 percent of GDP.

You know—the debt is almost as big as the entire Philippine economy, and that is bad. Ideally, government debts should not be more than 25 percent of the economy.

In other words, we have a problem, Gaston, because if Gloriaetta wins in May, I am not sure how she can continue sweeping the problem under the rag until 2010.

This cute administration may subsidize power to the end, because it can always heap the problem on the next administration, anyway. Politics—what can you do?

* * *

IN our fight to hurry up construction of new power plants, just to cut short the crisis by a couple of years, our own Napocor already gets a KO before the match even begins.

Without Napocor, we don't have the same solution which the administration of Kuya Eddie used to solve the crisis left behind by the administration Tita Cory.

Under Kuya Eddie, as you know, the heroic Napocor simply offered to buy power from any new power generation plant at any price—which was usually high.

Now who will perform the role of buyer at this time? Napocor is out in the cold, as we all know, and we have to carry it on our poor taxpayers' shoulder for a long time.

* * *

OUR only option today remains the same, investments from the private power generation companies, which will not happen with a sure buyer.

Well, building the plants involves big money, some $2-$3 billion, in fact, which, since we are not as crazy as Eddie Gil, we realize must come from abroad.

There are no sure buyer of the power from those private investors, because the Supreme Court already weakened the distribution side of the business.

It ruled, for instance, that the income tax payment of Meralco was part of its "return on investments," although the money went to the government, say, for the Supreme Court to spend.

Thus, all around us, we can see that nobody wants to move in the power business. Luckily, our Supreme Court is driving all foreign investors away with brilliant decision on every issue under the sun, including things it does not know s..t from.

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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of March 17, 2004)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	5,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	18	18	17.25	18	24,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	44	45	44	45	75,900
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	38.5	38.5	38.5	38.5	18,400
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.58	0.58	0.57	0.58	220,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	24.5	24.75	24.5	24.5	415,900
Philippine National Bank	23.25	23.25	23.25	23.25	3,200
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	12.25	12.25	12.25	12.25	200
Union Bank of the Phil.	25.5	25.5	25.5	25.5	12,000
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	23,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1890	1890	1890	1890	50
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.32	50,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1415	1420	1415	1420	350
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	21.5	21.5	21.5	21.5	33,500
Diversified Fin. Network	2	2	2	2	21,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.67	0.68	0.67	0.68	1,930,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	845	850	845	845	51,070
Ipeople Inc.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	21,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.037	0.037	0.037	0.037	100,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	1.74	1.74	1.68	1.7	9,589,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	890	915	890	910	233,380
Philweb Corp.	0.011	0.011	0.01	0.011	7,100,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	18.25	19	18.25	19	70,900
Manila Electric Co. B	28.5	30	28.5	29	890,700
Petron Corp.	2.8	2.95	2.8	2.95	2,193,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	3	3	3	3	344,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.26	0.28	10,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	10,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	26,000
Union Cement Corp.	1.28	1.4	1.28	1.4	1,418,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.15	3.15	3.1	3.1	55,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	28.5	29	28.5	29	3,100
Jollibee Foods Corp.	17	17.25	17	17.25	771,700
San Miguel Corp. A	56.5	56.5	56	56.5	87,300
San Miguel Corp. B	68.5	70	68.5	70	143,800
Universal Robina Corp.	6.1	6.3	6.1	6.3	339,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	190,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	5.9	6	5.9	6	1,084,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.9	2.95	2.9	2.9	53,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	40,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.51	0.52	0.47	0.5	28,320,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	760,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	20.75	21.75	20.75	21.5	616,900
Global Equities Inc.	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.055	100,000
Ionics Inc.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	32,000
Medco Holdings	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	6,820,000
Megaworld Corp.	1	1	1	1	640,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	6,270,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.86	0.86	0.85	0.85	300,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	30,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	14	14	13.75	13.75	18,300
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	440,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Interphil Labs Inc. B	1.94	1.94	1.94	1.94	50,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	100,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	400,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	220,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	100,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp (Pdr)	22	22	21.75	22	684,400
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,900
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,800
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Y	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,400
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,300
WGA - Preferred	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	2,000
OTHERS					
Far Eastern University	400	400	400	400	1,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.3	5.3	5.2	5.3	6,772,000
Cebu Prop. Vent. A	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	20,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.2	0.205	0.2	0.205	4,100,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	0.99	1	0.99	1	3,890,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.165	0.16	5.16	5.165	15,150,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	510,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	5.8	5.9	5.7	5.7	8,622,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.003	101,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	1.04	1.1	1.04	1.1	6,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	140,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.38	0.38	0.37	0.37	50,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	1,000,000

Foreign debt burden . . .

From page B1

This was followed by bond or noteholders at 29 percent, and private banks and other financial institutions at 18 percent.

The country's currency exposure remained largely in two major currencies: the US dollar (55 percent) and the Japanese yen (27 percent). The rest consisted of debts in 16 other currencies, while Special Drawing Rights (currency used by the International Monetary Fund) and the euro each accounted for about 4 percent of total.

DISCLOSURES

EDENA Low and Rodolfo Gutierrez resigned as directors of **Sanitary Wares Manufacturing Corp.** Elected to replace them were Norman Linvingstone and Ernesto Carpio. The company also moved its annual stockholders' meeting to May 28 with record date on May 10.

* * *

IMPERIAL Resources Inc. moved its annual stockholders' meeting to July 8.

* * *

FIL-Estate Corp. disclosed the resignation of Rafael Evangelista as director of the company. Ruben Payumo was elected new independent director and member of the company's audit, nomination and executive compensation committees.

* * *

NEGROS Navigation Company Inc. clarified that it is still in talks with Tsuneishi Heavy Industries Inc., which filed garnishing proceedings against Nenaco in a Cebu court. Both companies were ordered by the court to amicably work on a repayment plan.

* * *

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission approved **Salcon Power Corp.**'s change in financial period from a fiscal year of Aug. 1 to July 31 to calendar year of Jan. 1 to Dec. 31. Also amended was its annual stockholders' meeting date from the third Monday of November to the third Monday of April each year. ***Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research***

CURRENCIES

March 17, 2004 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.815328	1.000000	56.2680
Japan	Yen	0.007488	0.009184	0.5168
United Kingdom	Pound	1.477538	1.812200	101.9689
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.104645	0.128347	7.2218
Switzerland	Franc	0.637773	0.782228	44.0144
Canada	Dollar	0.611649	0.750188	42.2116
Singapore	Dollar	0.478872	0.587337	33.0483
Australia	Dollar	0.603589	0.740302	41.6553
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.162789	2.652661	149.2599
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.217421	0.266667	15.0048
Brunei	Dollar	0.477470	0.585617	32.9515
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000095	0.000116	0.0065
Thailand	Baht	0.020668	0.025349	1.4263
UAE	Dirham	0.221985	0.272264	15.3198
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.226500	69.0127
Argentina	Peso	0.280906	0.344531	19.3861
Brazil	Real	0.281099	0.344768	19.3994
Denmark	Kroner	0.134253	0.164661	9.2651
India	Rupee	0.018038	0.022124	1.2449
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.214589	0.263193	14.8093
Mexico	New Peso	0.073886	0.090621	5.0991
New Zealand	Dollar	0.529709	0.649688	36.5566
Norway	Kroner	0.118177	0.144944	8.1557
Pakistan	Rupee	0.014254	0.017483	0.9837
South Africa	Rand	0.122108	0.149766	8.4270
Korea	Won	0.000697	0.000855	0.0481
Sweden	Kroner	0.108164	0.132663	7.4647
Syria	Pound	0.015801	0.019380	1.0905
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024528	0.030084	1.6928
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000426	0.000522	0.0294

Benguet Corp. submits bid document

PUBLICLY listed Benguet Corp. yesterday submitted the second envelope to the Prequalification, Bid and Awards Committee (PBAC) on the Baguio Water District's (BWD) bidding for a bulk water supply project.

Under the the Terms of Reference published on Nov. 30 and released on Dec. 18 last year, the deadline for submission of Envelope "B" was yesterday. This envelope contains the financial and technical, comprehensive feasibility, and legal requirements.

The company is one of four pre-qualified bidders to participate in the project to supply Baguio City with 50,000 cubic meters of treated water a day.

The company's entry into the bulk water project is part of the comprehensive plan to rehabilitate its mined out Antamok open pit by converting it into a water reservoir to serve the water needs of Itogon, and the excess water to be supplied to Baguio City and other areas.

The company added that the project would have a beneficial economic impact on Itogon, where the water reservoir and treatment facilities will be located. The 50,000 cubic meters a day of water needed by Baguio City is just a fraction of the total water resources controlled by the company. Its vision is to harness these resources to meet the future water requirement of Benguet Province.

The company said the disclosure was in accordance with the rules of the Securities and Exchange Commission and the Philippine Stock Exchange.

ABS-CBN seeks $30-M loan

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

TELEVISION giant ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. will raise $30 million through a negotiated loan to fund the requirements of its cable subsidiary SkyVision Corp.

ABS-CBN chief financial officer Randy Estrellado said the company was talking with a foreign bank for the loan and expected to raise the amount this year.

Under the proposed terms, the loan can be converted into shares after two years.

Estrellado declined to identify the bank.

"We are making sure all of the funds are available. We are preparing to take the full requirement if necessary," he said.

Of the $30 million, $5 million will be used to update loan payments and the remaining $25 million will be used to put up set-up boxes. These will be used to combat piracy among cable subscribers.

ABS-CBN reported its net income grew 131 percent in 2003 to P1 billion from P438 million in 2002.

Gross airtime and other broadcasting-related revenues increased by 12 percent to P11 billion. This was due to the 15-percent growth in airtime revenues of its flagship VHF channel 2.

Airtime revenues from channel 2 alone accounted for 93 percent of the total parent airtime revenue of P10 billion.

PUBLIC AUCTION

VEHICLE
• 1 Unit Hyundai Grace H-100 Van

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ANNOUNCEMENT

The **BASES CONVERSION DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY** is transferring to its new office at the Bonifacio Global City. Starting March 23, 2004 its address, telephone, fax and PO Box numbers are as follows:

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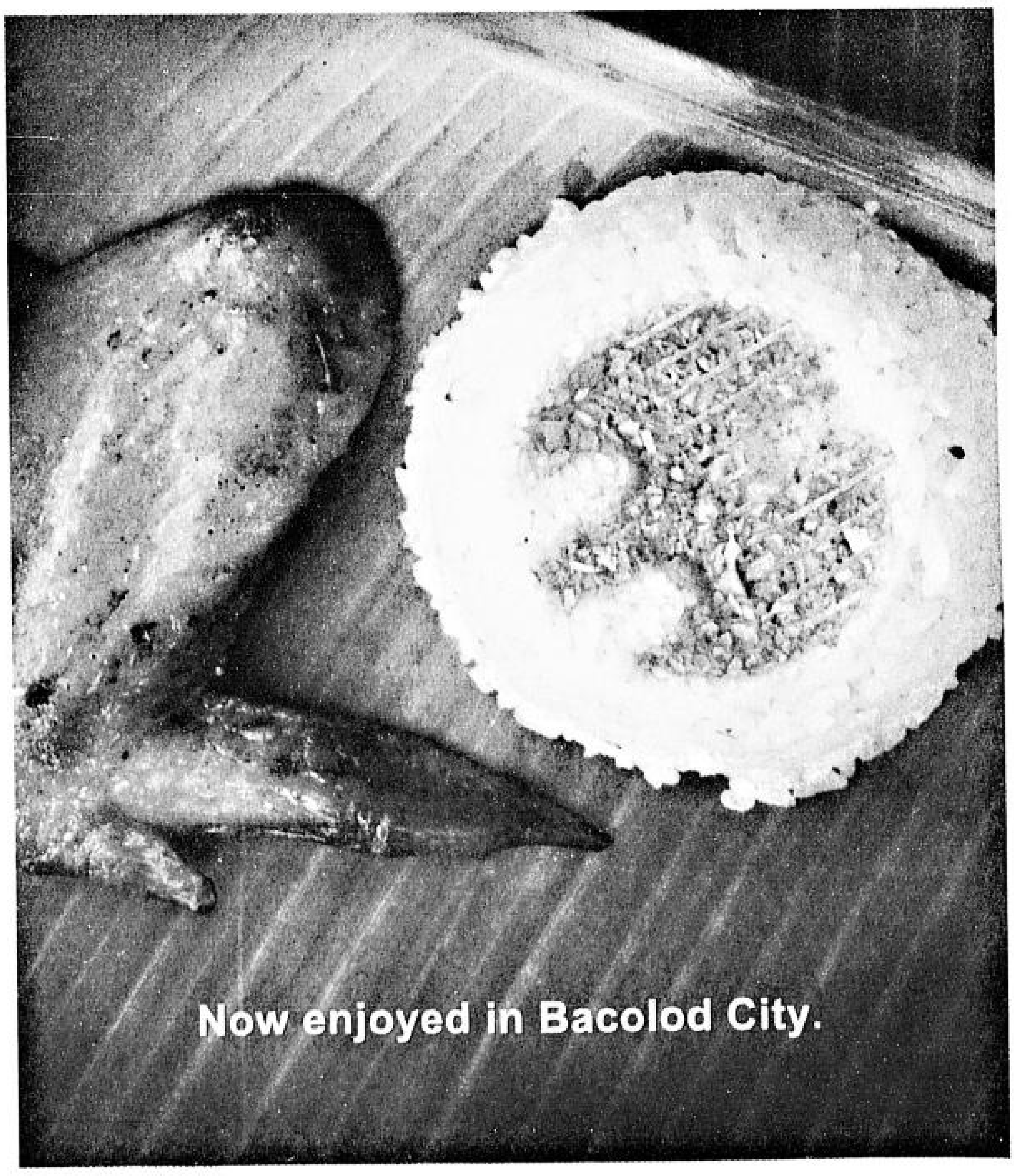
2/F Bonifacio Technology Center
31st Street Corner 2nd Avenue
Bonifacio Global City, Taguig, M.M. 1634
Trunk Line # (632) 816-6666
FAX # 816-0996
PO Box # 42, Taguig Post Office, Taguig, M.M.
E-mail address: bcda@bcda.gov.ph
www.bcda.gov.ph



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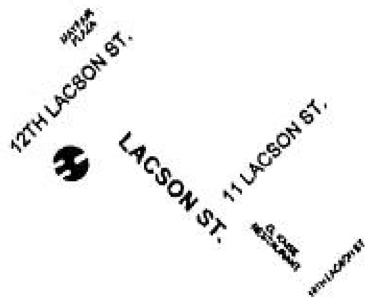

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Fed leaves US rates unchanged at 1958 lows

WASHINGTON—The US Federal Reserve on Tuesday held interest rates at 1958 lows and signaled it was in no hurry to raise borrowing costs with job creation sluggish and inflation tame.

The unanimous decision by the policy-making Federal Open Market Committee keeps the trend-setting federal funds rate for overnight loans between banks at one percent, a level hit after a cut last June.

Policy-makers sounded more cautious about prospects for strong job growth, so far a missing ingredient in the recovery from the 2001 recession, and one that is taking on a growing profile ahead of November presidential elections.

"Although job losses have slowed, new hiring has lagged," the FOMC said.

The US central bank repeated that risks of a fall in inflation were "almost equal" to that of a climb in consumer prices and chances of a pick-up in growth and a downturn were "roughly" balanced.

The FOMC also reiterated it could afford to be "patient"

about raising rates, implying that policy-makers feel scant pressure to boost credit costs despite a strengthening economy because inflation remains muted and job growth is anemic.

The FOMC statement was highly similar to one issued after their last meeting on Jan. 28, but slightly more downbeat.

"The evidence accumulated over the inter-meeting period (since late January) indicates that output is continuing to expand at a solid pace," the Fed said, in contrast to the January, when they said output was growing "briskly."

Analysts said the Fed was making the point that it will stay the course with easy monetary policy until a persuasive economic upturn was in place, possibly maintaining current rates through 2004.

"Until and unless there are significant increases in jobs over a period, tighter monetary policy (higher rates) is out of the question," said economist Sung Won Sohn of Wells Fargo & Co. in Minneapolis.

A poll by Reuters of 20 Wall Street analysts on Tuesday found a growing certainty that any rate rises are months in the future. No respondents foresaw a rate rise at the next scheduled FOMC meeting on May 4 and 10 and said they now felt no change in rates will occur before 2005.

With only 21,000 jobs created in February, far fewer than forecast and under the 100,000 or so needed just to absorb new job-seekers, the Fed has no reason to raise rates, the economists said.

Bond prices strengthened on the indication rates will stay low for some time, with the 30-year US Treasury bond jumping 1-1/32 points to yield 4.65 percent and the 10-year Treasury note ahead 2 1/32s and yielding 3.69 percent.

Stocks ended higher after seesawing up and down after the Fed decision, finally settling on an optimistic assessment that credit costs will stay cheap for some time.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average ended up 81.78 points, or 0.81 percent, at 10,184.67 while the technology-heavy Nasdaq Composite Index added 3.89 points, or 0.20 percent, to end at 1,943.09.

The dollar's value fell against the Japanese yen but was nearly unchanged against the euro. Higher US rates would make dollar-denominated assets more attractive to foreigners but there is no sign that low rates are draining investment funds.

While the economy has clearly gained strength, its failure to generate more jobs has fired a debate between President George W. Bush's Republicans and Sen. John Kerry, the certain Democratic nominee, ahead of November's presidential election.

Some 2.2 million non-farm jobs have been scrubbed from payrolls since Bush took office in 2001, but administration officials argue he inherited a recession and faced setbacks such as the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks and corporate scandals.

Kerry has lashed back, calling corporate executives who move jobs to cheap-labor countries from the United States traitors and urging a close watch on the move of white-collar and technological work to China and India.

Reuters

IMF post remains up for grabs

TOKYO—Once bitten, twice shy.

Japan, which four years ago launched a contentious campaign to head the International Monetary Fund (IMF), is keeping a low profile this time as Europe finalizes its choice for chief of the financial firefighter.

Germany's Horst Koehler resigned prematurely as IMF chief this month to seek the German presidency, reigniting debate over who should run the IMF and how the choice should be made.

By an unwritten agreement, the IMF has been headed by a European and its sister lender, the World Bank, by an American ever since they were founded after World War II.

"Japan is watching the situation and can make a move at any time. But we don't want to be a 'Don Quixote'," said a Japanese government source earlier this week.

The opening at the IMF comes at a time when Japan's global economic clout has been clipped by a decade of stagnation.

But Tokyo is still keen to boost its global profile in other ways, backing the United States by sending troops to Iraq and stepping up a campaign for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council.

Tokyo's apparent caution toward seeking the IMF post is born partly of bitter experience, partly of practicality.

Last time, Japan backed former top financial diplomat Eisuke Sakakibara, a high-profile critic of the IMF at the time, for the post, but had to withdraw after the United States and Europe settled on Koehler.

Sakakibara said on Wednesday that Japan was unlikely to make a second bid this time round. "My candidacy four years ago was somewhat symbolic," Sakakibara told Reuters.

"Given the current structure of the IMF, it is impossible for a Japanese or any Asian to head that institution," he said.

In fact, the top post at the IMF—which in the past two decades has rescued such nations as Argentina and Indonesia with billions of dollars in loans—looks likely to go to a European, possibly outgoing Spanish Economy Minister Rodrigo Rato.

Some think it's past time to change how the heads of the IMF and the World Bank—the two pillars of the postwar global economic architecture—are chosen.

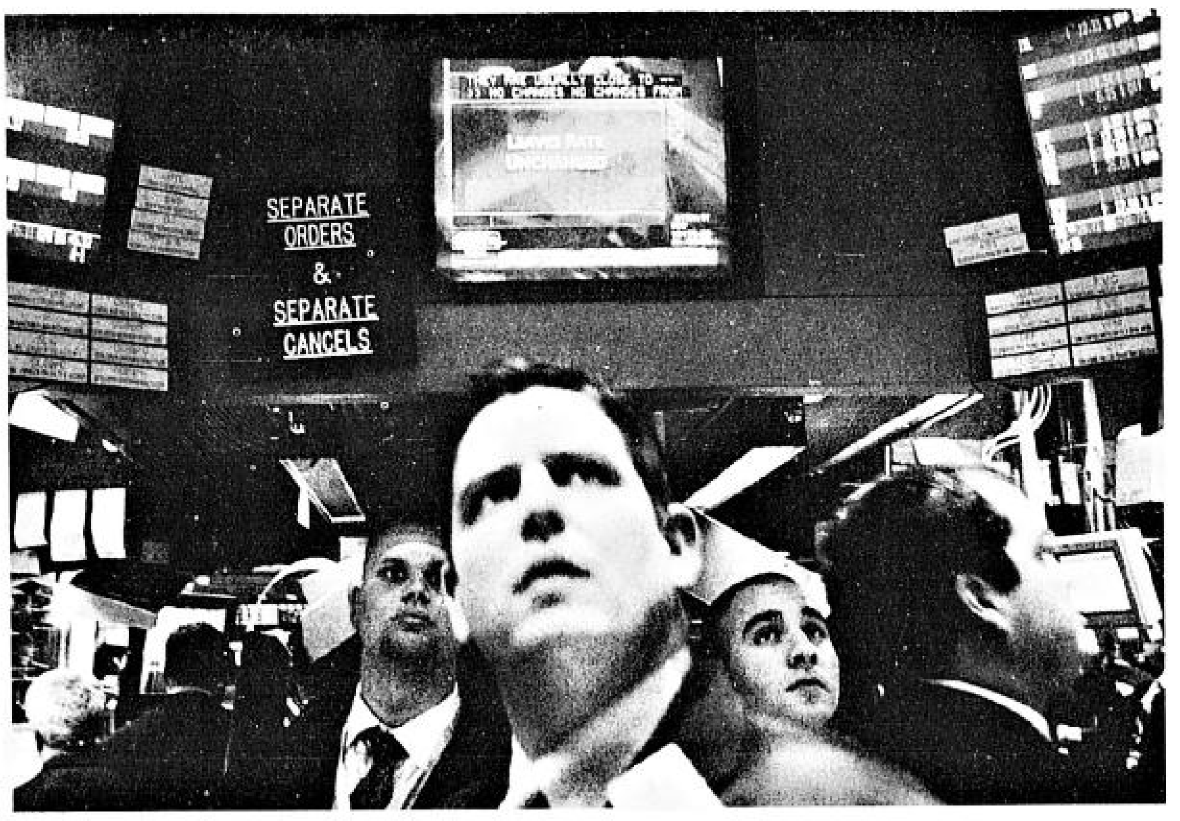
The World Bank helps developing countries through loans and policy advice.

African finance ministers and central bank chiefs last week again called for the IMF to open the selection process to all its 184 member states.

Japanese media agreed.

"Whatever promise was made at the end of World War II, this is not a rule that can be acceptable in the world of half a century later," said Japanese business daily Nihon Keizai.

Reuters



TRADERS on floor of the New York Stock Exchange look as an interest rate ruling by the Federal Reserve is announced on March 16 in New York City. US stocks rallied as investors took in stride the Federal Reserve decision to keep interest rates steady and swooped in for bargains after steep losses in five of the past six sessions. The Dow Jones industrials advanced 82.89 points (0.82 percent) to 10,185.78 while the Nasdaq climbed 4.15 points (0.21 percent) to 1,943.35 at the closing bell. AFP

Citigroup CEO got $111,000 a day

NEW YORK—Sanford I. Weill was the chief executive of Citigroup for just nine months of last year, but he still took home one of the biggest paychecks of any corporate executive.

In cash alone, Weill, who turned 71 on Tuesday, earned $30 million, or about $111,000 for every day before he stepped down as chief executive on Oct. 1, while remaining the company's chairman. He also received 2.5 million options on Citigroup's stock that the company said were worth $13.9 million when they were granted. Weill's 2003 compensation was detailed in the company's proxy statement, filed with regulators Tuesday.

All told, Weill's compensation for last year was $44.7 million. That pay package rivals the one that the MBNA Corp., a credit card company that is considerably smaller and less profitable than Citigroup, gave its chief executive, Charles M. Cawley in 2003. Cawley, who has since retired, received $45 million in cash, stock and options.

Still, Weill's take-home pay was a but fraction of all he reaped last year from his association with Citigroup, a company that traces its lineage to the Commercial Credit Corp., which Weill began running in 1986. Last October, he sold 5.57 million shares back to the company for $262.4 million. He also realized $23 million from exercising options, the proxy shows. He still owned 19.6 million Citigroup shares at the start of this month.

Last year was certainly a better one for Weill than 2002, when Citigroup agreed to pay a $400 million fine as part of an industry-wide settlement to end regulatory investigations into conflicts of interest among stock analysts. After that agreement, Weill's nomination to be a director of the New York Stock Exchange drew loud criticism, and he withdrew.

Weill received no bonus for 2002, after taking more than $26 million in cash and stock in 2001. But in early 2003, the compensation committee of Citigroup's board gave Weill 1.5 million options. Seven months later, he gave up the chief executive's title and said he would stay on as chairman until spring 2006.

It is not clear whether Weill will have any more huge paydays because Citigroup has not disclosed how it will pay him as chairman. But in the company's new proxy statement, the committee's report had a tone of finality, crediting Weill with leading the company to a record profit, a 20-percent return on equity and "a seamless transition to new leadership."

Leah Johnson, a company spokeswoman, cited the "tremendous value" Weill had created for shareholders since 1986. A dollar invested in Commercial Credit that year would have been worth $29.58 in Citigroup stock at the end of 2003, she said.

Weill's successor, Charles O. Prince, received $29 million in cash, stock and options, making him one of three Citigroup executives to have been paid more than $28 million last year, according to the proxy statement. Robert B. Willumstad, the company's president, received $28.5 million.

Robert E. Rubin, the former Treasury secretary who is chairman of Citigroup's executive committee, received about $17 million in cash, stock and options, down from about $18.4 million in 2002.

Few companies have reported paying their senior executives as much as Prince and Willumstad received, said Paul Hodgson, who analyzes executive pay for The Corporate Library in Portland, Maine. The chief executive of Merrill Lynch, E. Stanley O'Neal, was among the highest paid chief executives on Wall Street in 2003, earning slightly more than $28 million, Hodgson said.

New York Times

E. Asia needs to cooperate on forex rate

WASHINGTON—Powered by 60 percent of the world's foreign exchange reserves, East Asia should have an effective mechanism for exchange rate cooperation that can resist US pressure on currency and trade policy, experts said Tuesday.

Finance ministers of East Asian economies Japan, China, South Korea and the 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) have just started to discuss exchange rate issues.

But the "Asean plus three" meeting has not graduated to exchange rate cooperation, like the forum of the Group of Seven finance ministers and central bank governors.

Speaking at a conference in Washington on the future of economic relations between the United States and East Asia, a special adviser to the Japanese Cabinet proposed that the East Asian countries "considerably strengthen" the meeting among their finance ministers "as a body for exchange rate cooperation by including central bank governors."

The 13 East Asian economies now hold more than 60 percent of the world's foreign exchange reserves totalling $1.6 trillion. *AFP*

Singapore Feb. exports surged

SINGAPORE—Singapore's exports climbed for a fourth straight month in February, powered by shipments of drugs and electronics to Europe and Asia, more than compensating for a slackening in exports to the United States.

Excluding oil products, Singapore's exports rose 11 percent from January after seasonal adjustment, nearly double market forecasts and buoyed by a 19.8-percent surge in trade to China in goods such as raw technology components used to build computers.

"The numbers confirm that the recovery should be on a rather strong note this year," said Low Ping Yee, economist at United Overseas Bank. "It indicates that the outlook for the manufacturing sector remains positive in the months ahead."

From a year earlier, exports gained 25.7 percent to $5.72 billion, government trade promotion body International Enterprise Singapore said.

Singapore, whose manufacturers of hard disk drives and other electronics account for 53 percent of exports excluding oil products, has benefited as multinationals such as US-based Seagate Technology expand capacity to meet bubbling Asian demand.

"We have a synchronized global recovery and Singapore is benefiting from that and these numbers are broadly in line with what should have come through at this time," said P.K. Basu, managing director of consultancy Robust Economic Analysis.

Reuters

CHINESE workers build the hull of a ship at a shipyard in Shanghai, March 16. China's business capital, one of the world's busiest container ports, is trying to revive Shanghai's traditional role as the mainland's trade hub with a multi-billion port and shipyard. REUTERS

Asian shares firm; dollar down

SINGAPORE—Asian shares chased a rebound in US stocks on Wednesday after the Federal Reserve kept interest rates unchanged, while the dollar hit a three-week low versus the yen on reports Japan may end aggressive intervention.

Security fears after the Madrid blasts combined with the weak dollar to keep gold steady above $402 an ounce. Oil hovered near fresh one-year highs on concern future attacks could disrupt supplies and ahead of inventory data later in the day.

The Fed held interest rates at 46-year lows and signaled it was in no hurry to raise borrowing costs with job growth sluggish and inflation tame, spurring a rise in Treasury prices.

Most Asian stock indices firmed, with Tokyo's Topix closing up 1.9 percent at a 2 1/2-year high as economic recovery hopes boosted shares in companies that rely on domestic demand.

Japan's benchmark index rose 1.7 percent to 11,436.86.

"Domestic economic optimism has been prompting buyers to chase value stocks in the domestic sector, and now land-related stocks like builders and real estate firms are drawing attention ahead of the land price data," said Masatoshi Sato, a senior strategist from Mizuho Investors Securities.

Japan is due to release land price data for 2003 next week, which investors expect will show a recovery in prices after 12 years of declines.

MSCI's broadest index of Asia Pacific shares outside Japan was up more than one percent. South Korean shares jumped 2.6 percent, while a broad rally lifted Australian shares to a two-year high.

The dollar hit a fresh three-week low around 108.20 yen before creeping back to the 108.30 level.

Wall Street's recovery helped boost Asian exporters and technology stocks, lifting Sony Corp. 1.9 percent and Honda Motor up 2.1 percent, despite the yen's strength.

South Korean shares rose on technology, banking and auto maker stocks but the market was still cautious after the impeachment of the country's president last week.

Taiwan stocks erased early gains to close down 0.2 percent at a three-week low, weighed down by uncertainty ahead of Saturday's presidential election.

South Korean technology bellwether Samsung Electronics rose 3.2 percent, while shares in smaller rival Hynix Semiconductor Co. climbed 0.9 percent to 17-month highs on optimism for better chip demand later this year.

Oil was steady at $37.48 a barrel after hitting a fresh one-year peak of $37.80 in New York.

Reuters

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WANTED TO BUY

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REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

HOUSE

CONDO/TWNHSE

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PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is given that an extra-judicial settlement of the estate of the deceased **FELIPE G. GUTIERREZ** was executed by his heirs and acknowledged before Consul J. Eduardo Malaya of the Consulate General of the Philippines, S.F. CA USA on January 9, 2004. Per Service No. 0200, OR No. 0501, Doc. No. 0200, Book XXV, Page No. 0006, Series of 2004.
(PDI-March 18, 25 & April 1, 2004)

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late FORTUNATO BARCELONA & MARIA AYSON-BARCELONA was extrajudicially settled among his her heirs as per Doc.436, Page.89, Book.48 Series of 2004 under Notary Public Evaristo B. Urbina of QC. (PDI-3 /18, 25 & 4/1, 20004)

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late MARIANO O. LIMJUCO was extrajudicially settled with self adjudication by his sole heir MARINA LIMJUCO PERALEJO as per Doc. No. 2; Page No. 31; Book No. XIV; Series of 2004 before Notary Public Atty. Renato Ambrosio L. Peralejo of Quezon City.
(PDI-March 4, 11 &18,2004)

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late HONORIO L. CARLOS has been extrajudicially settled among his heirs as per Doc. No. 128, Page No. 27, Book No. I, Series of 2004 by Notary Public Atty. Manuel N. Camacho of Manila.
(PDI-March 18, 25 & April 1, 2004)

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NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Quezon City

NOTICE OF INVITATION FOR YELLOW CORN ALLOCATION

The Department of Agriculture (DA) through the National Food Authority (NFA) shall be importing 350,000 MT yellow corn. All interested corn users and producers who want to avail of the corn allocation should submit their Letter of Intent (LOI) to the NFA and should be guided by the following:

1. The quality specification is yellow corngrains equivalent to US Grade No. 2 or China Foodgrade and Feedgrade category.
2. Arrival period is April to June 2004. (First tranche)
3. A P0.50/kg service fee shall be charged by the DA/NFA.
4. The cost of the imported yellow corn shall not be less than P11.00/kg., ex-1st warehouse inclusive of the P0.50/kg service fee.
5. The 350,000 MT yellow corn shall be distributed by allocation to legitimate corn users registered with the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) and corn producers duly certified by the Department of Agriculture (DA).
6. The volume of allocation per category shall be as follows:

Category	Volume (in MT)
Hog Raisers	100,000
Poultry Raisers	100,000
Feedmillers	100,000
Corn Producers	50,000

7. All interested corn users and corn producers shall submit a Letter of Intent which shall include the total volume to be purchased, the preferred disport and the category to which the applicant shall be considered. It must also be supported by a BAI Certification of 2004 and a copy of the Board Resolution authorizing the individual to transact business for and in behalf of the company. For corn producers, DA certification with quantity of corn allowed to be purchased shall be required. All requests that do not contain the above requirements shall be rejected.
8. The maximum volume to be allocated to the corn user shall be based on their three (3) months corn consumption requirements as reflected in the BAI certification as of 2004. The maximum volume to be allocated to the corn producer shall be based on the volume of corn allowed to be purchased as certified by the DA.
9. Corn users and corn producers shall be a given a period of five (5) working days within which to submit their Letters of Intent after the last day of publication.
10. A Commitment Fee/Performance Bond equivalent to P1.00/kilo of the total volume allocated shall be paid by the corn user three (3) days after receipt of the Notice of Allocation. Payment shall be in Cash, Manager's or Cashier's Check at NFA Central Office, Matimyas Bldg., E Rodriguez Sr. Ave., Quezon City.
11. Total payment shall be made upon receipt of the Notice of Payment from the NFA three (3) days before arrival of the vessel or the arrival of the documents whichever comes first.
12. The NFA reserves the right to reject any or all offers, to waive any defects or informalities found therein and accept only such offers which in its judgement are most reasonable and advantageous to the Government.
13. For further details you may secure a copy of the General Guidelines on the Importation and Disposition of Yellow Corngrains at the Marketing Operations Department, 5th Floor, Matimyas Bldg., E. Rodriguez Sr. Ave., Quezon City or you may call at Tel. Nos. 712-15-72; 712-19-28; 711-74-33, 712-33-41 to 54 loc. 8514 and 8515.

(Sgd.) ATTY. ARTHUR C. YAP
Administrator

(PDI-March 17 & 18, 2004)

LEYTE III ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
(LEYECO III)
Tunga, Leyte

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Leyte III Electric Cooperative, Inc., invites interested suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the supply and delivery of various Electrical Materials, Office Equipment and Services.

1. Various Pole Line Hardware & Electrical Materials.
2. NOTEBOOK: Laptop Computer.
3. SOFTWARE for Billing and Collection Unbundling of Rates.
4. Termite Control and Preventive Services of all LEYECO III building.
5. Transformer Rewinding:
    a. 19 u 25 KVA transformer
    b. 19 u 15 KVA transformer
    c. 20 u 10 KVA transformer
6. Fire Extinguisher
    a. 5 u Dry Chem. 20 lbs. (for refilling)
    b. 2 u Dry Chem. 100 lbs. (for refilling)
7. Preventive Maintenance Services (PMS) to 5MVA Power Transformer.
8. Fabrication of Meter box for CLUSTERING per Spec. 100 pcs.

SPECIFIC DATES OF UNDERTAKING

Date of Publication	March 17, 18 & 19, 2004	
Issuance of Bid Documents starts	March 22, 2004	
PRE-BID Conference	April 02, 2004	LEYECO III Conference Room
Submission / Rejection of Bids	April 05 to 23, 2004	
Opening of Bids/Quotations	April 26, 2004	LEYECO III Conference Room

Interested Suppliers to join this bidding are advised to submit accreditation requirements from date of this publication until March 25, 2004 address to the chairman of Accreditation Committee. For complete list description of Pole Line Hardware & Electrical Materials will be distributed during the Pre-bidding conference. Eligibility and Bid Forms tender documents can be obtained from PBAC secretariat at LEYECO III OFFICE upon payment of non-refundable amount of P1,000.00 during the Pre-bidding conference.

The bids and awards committee reserves the right to reject any or all bids to waive any defects or formally therein and to accept bids considered complying and most advantageous to the cooperative.

(Sgd.) ENGR. ESTEBAN L. MANLAPAS
PBAC Chairman

(PDI – March 17, 18 & 19, 2004)

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TEST EQUIPMENT - **FLUKE** Thermocouple Scanners, Hydra Data Acquisition Unit, Thermometers; **HEWLETT PACKARD** Pulse Generators; **TEKTRONIX** Digital Oscilloscopes; **SIMCO** Electrostatic Analyzers; Blow Apparatus; Ultrasonic Cleaners; Static Eliminators; Control Boxes; Power Supply Boxes, etc.
LAPTOP COMPUTERS - **IBM** 600E Thinkpad; **TOSHIBA** Po rtege 660 CDT, Portege 650CT, Portege 610CT Tecra 720CDT, Tecra 720CDT, Tecra Satellite Pro; **NEC** Versa P/75, Versa; **ZENITH DATA SYSTEMS** Z-lite 320C, Znote 433LNC+ Laptop Computers; A Qty. Of Laptop Accessories, etc.
FACTORY SERVICES - Stainless Steel Trolleys; Stainless Steel Storage Bins; Stainless Steel Cabinets; Stainless Steel Work Surfaces; **STANLEY** Steel Components Storage Cabinets; Steel Tooling Cabinets; Chemical Storage Cabinets; Stainless Steel/ Aluminium/Steel Rackings Systems; Stainless Steel Hanging Racks; Anti-Static Work Surfaces; Steel Personnel Lockers, etc.
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At.: 1321 Apolinario St., Bangkal, Makati, Philippines
On View: Fri. 26th March 2004 - 9:00am to 5:00pm & morning of sale day
Refundable Deposit: Php50,000 (upon registration)
Please bring valid ID to be presented during registration

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Republic of the Philippines
Province of Masbate
City of Masbate

Loan Agreement # PH-P200

INVITATION TO BID

The Republic of the Philippines, through the Department of Education, has received an Official Development Assistance (ODA) loan from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) in the amount of P1,749 million (Y7,210 million) towards the financing of the Secondary Education Development and Improvement Project (SEDIP) dated December 28, 1999. It is intended that part of the proceeds on this loan will be applied to eligible payments for the new construction and/or repair of different school buildings located at **MASBATE NATIONAL COMPREHENSIVE HIGH SCHOOL (MNCHS), MASBATE CITY MASBATE**. Disbursement of the ODA loan by JBIC will be subject, in all respects, to the terms and conditions of the Loan agreement, including the disbursement procedures and the "Guidelines for Procurement under "JBIC ODA Loans." No party other than the Department of Education shall derive any rights from the Loan Agreement or have any claims to loan proceeds. The above Loan Agreement will cover only a part of the project cost. As for the remaining portion, the agency will take appropriate measures for finance.

JBIC requires that bidders and contractors, as well as DepEd-SEDIP under contracts funded with JBIC ODA loans and other Japanese ODA, observe the highest standard of ethics during the procurement and execution of such contracts. In pursuance of this policy, JBIC: 1. will reject a proposal for award if it determines that the bidder recommended for award has engaged in corrupt or fraudulent practices in competing for the contract in question; 2. will recognize a contractor as ineligible, for a stated period of time, to be awarded a contract funded with JBIC ODA loans if it, at any time, determines that the contractor has engaged in corrupt or fraudulent practices in competing for, or in executing, another contract financed by JBIC ODA loans or other Japanese ODA.

Bidding is open to Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) registered contractors or joint venture contractors with PCAB license category **A** with classification **Medium**. General Building. The approved budget will be announced during the Pre-bid conference.

Bidders may obtain further information and acquire the bidding documents from:

The Bids and Awards Committee
City of Masbate
Tel. No.: 333-5954
Telefax No.: 333-5035

A complete set of bidding documents may be purchase by interested eligible bidders starting March 09, 2004 until **5:00 P.M.** of March 22, 2004 upon submission of a letter of intent to the above office and payment of a non-refundable of Three Thousand (P3,000.00) Pesos.

Pre-bid conference shall be conducted on March 23, 2004 at 2:00 P.M to be held at the Conference Room, Office of the City Mayor, City of Masbate.

Submission of bid together with all the documents required in the bid documents must be delivered to the aforesaid venue on March 30, 2004 at 10:00 A.M. at the Conference Room, Office of the City Mayor, City of Masbate. All bids will be opened immediately thereafter in the presence of the bidders or their legally authorized representatives.

(Sgd.) **BERNARDITA S. DALANON**
City General Services Officer
BAC Chairman

(PDI – March 5, 11 & 18, 2004)

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
(Head Office)
INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) invites interested general building contractors currently with Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) License to apply for pre-qualification and if later found qualified, to bid for the project described below.

Project Title	: Proposed Rewaterproofing of the PICC Roofdecks and Canopies
Scope of Work	: Furnishing of all materials, labor, tools, equipment, technical supervision and other services and performing all operations necessary for the completion of the proposed rewaterproofing of the PICC Roofdecks and Canopies in accordance with the approved plans and specifications and subject to the terms and conditions of the contract.
Project Location	: PICC Complex, Pasay City
Approved Budget	: Twenty Five Million Eight Hundred Sixteen Thousand Three Hundred Fifteen Only (Php 25,816,315.00)
Source of Funding	: Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
Minimum Requirements (Criteria)	
PCAB License	: IAC category of at least medium "B" (Waterproofing Works)
Contractor's Construction Experience	: Should have completed within the last five (5) years (1999 to present) at least two (2) projects involving waterproofing / rewaterproofing of offices and buildings one of which costs not less than Thirteen Million Pesos.
Certification of Satisfactory Performance	: Should be able to submit notarized affidavits of Satisfactory Performance for the declared completed similar project.
Net Financial Contracting Capacity computed as 10 x (Current Asset less Current Liabilities) minus (Value of all on-going contracts including awarded yet to be started)	: at least Twenty Five Million Eight Hundred Thousand Pesos (P25,800,000.00)
Credit Line / Cash Deposit Certificate Req't.	Pesos Two Million Six Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php 2,600,000.00)
Eligibility Statement Forms	
Cost of Forms	Two Hundred Pesos per set (P200.00/set)
Date	March 12 to 19, 2004
Deadline of Submission	March 22, 2004
Notice of Eligibility / Ineligibility	
Date	March 31, 2004
Bid / Tender Documents	Shall be issued only to eligible contractors upon payment of the non-refundable fee
Non-refundable fee	Five Thousand Pesos (P5,000.00)
Date	April 01 to 02, 2004
Pre-bid Conference	
Date and Time	April 12, 2004 / 10:00 a.m.
Venue	BSP Main Complex, A. Mabini cor. P. Ocampo Sts.
Submission and Opening of Bids	
Deadline of Submission	April 27, 2004 / 10:00 a.m.

For inquiries, please call BAC Secretariat - telephone no. 524-7011 local 3143.

The venue for the issuance and submission of accomplished eligibility statements and bid documents is at the BAC Secretariat, Room 204, 2nd Floor – Five Storey Building BSP Complex, A. Mabini cor. P. Ocampo Sts., Manila, 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 nn & 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Schedule for issuance of notice of eligibility / ineligibility up to deadline of submission of bids may be subject to change.

The provisions of Republic Act No. 9184 & its Implementing Rules and Regulations relative to the bidding and award of contract including its implementation shall apply.

BSP reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any defect or formality therein, or accept such bid or award any part thereof to any contractor/s whose bid/s is/are evaluated to be most advantageous to BSP. Furthermore, BSP is not obligated to compensate/indemnify the contractor for any expenses or loss that may be incurred in the preparation of bids nor does it guarantee that an award of contract will be made.

(Sgd.) MARCOS J. SIONGCO, JR.
Chairman

(PDI – March 12 & 18, 2004)

Republika ng Pilipinas
PANGASIWAAN NG TUBIG AT ALKANTARILYA SA METRO MANILA
Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System
Katipunan Road, Balara, Quezon City 1105, Philippines

15 March 2004

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (CONSULTANT SERVICES)

PHILIPPINES
Strengthening of Planning of Water Supply, Sewerage and Sanitation Services in Metro Manila under MWSS
(Water Supply, Sewerage and Sanitation Sector)
CONSULTING SERVICES

Expressions of Interest

The Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) has received a Technical Assistance financing from the World Bank, through the Japan Policy and Human Resources Development, toward the cost of the Strengthening of Planning of Water Supply, Sewerage and Sanitation Services in Metro Manila under MWSS, and intends to apply part of the proceeds for consultant services. The services shall include, but not limited to, the following:

(a) Updating of the MWSS' water supply, sewerage and sanitation master plan, including developing specific plans to address government efforts in cleaning-up of Pasig River and Manila Bay as well as the possible passage of Clean Water Act.
(b) Analysis of technical options and identifying least cost options to address environmental degradation in Metro Manila.
(c) Determining the appropriate policy on sewer charges, including the extent of subsidy, as necessary.
(d) Conduct a study on willingness to pay of communities for sewerage and sanitation services.

The MWSS now invites eligible consultants to indicate their interest in providing the services. Interested consultants must provide information indicating that they are qualified to perform the services (brochures, description of similar assignments, experience in similar conditions, availability of appropriate skills among staff, etc.). The Consultant should have prepared at least one Sewerage/Sanitation Master Plan of a city or metro area with a population of at least 5,000,000 within the last ten years. Consultants may associate to enhance their qualifications.

A consultant will be selected in accordance with the procedures set out in the World *Bank's Guidelines: Selection and Employment of Consultants by World Bank Borrowers* (current edition).

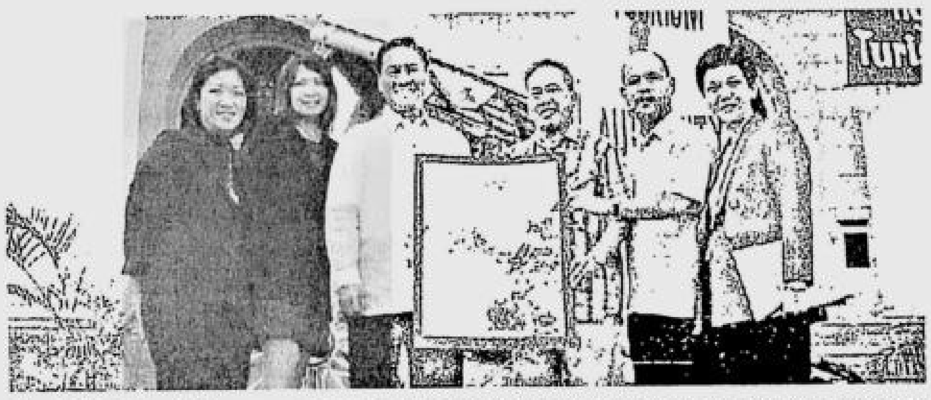
Interested consultants may obtain the Pre-qualification statement/forms at the address below during office hours, from 0800 to 1700 hours.

Expressions of interest, together with filled-in prequalification statement/forms, must be delivered to the address below by **29 March 2004**; 1700 hours.

MWSS Bidding and Awards Committee (BAC)
Attention: Ms. Macra A. Cruz, Chairman
Engineering and Project Management Department
Ground Floor, Engineering Building
Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System
Katipunan Road, Balara, Quezon City, Philippines
Telefax Nos. (632) 922-2568, (632) 920-5413
E-mail: bcleofas@philonline.com

(Sgd.) **ORLANDO C. HONDRADE**
Administrator

(PDI - March 18 & 20, 2004)



The DOT kicks off its summer travel campaign with Island Caravan : The Nautical Highway Adventure scheduled March 26-30, 2004. In photo are DOT Sec. Obet Pagdanganan (3rd from left) and Bureau Director Ting delos Reyes of Domestic Tourism (4th from left) together with members of the Island Caravan consortium.

ANNOUNCEMENT

TO ALL U.P. CREDIT COOPERATIVE MEMBERS:

You are all invited to attend the 59th Annual General Assembly and Election of Officers on Tuesday, March 30, 2004 at ANG BAHAY NG ALUMNI, UP Campus, UP Diliman, Quezon City. Registration will start at 1:00 p.m. followed by General Assembly and Election of Officers until 5:00 p.m.

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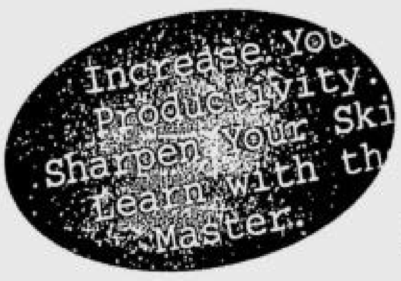

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SEMINAR TOPICS/PROGRAMME

April 13, 2004, Tuesday, 9:30am- 4:30pm (Whole day)
Learning Photoshop CS and Its Applications

April 14, 2004, Wednesday, 9:30am-4:30pm (Whole day)
Learning InDesign CS and Its Applications in Desktop Publishing

April 15, 2004, Thursday, 9:30am-12:30nn
Fundamentals of Effective Publications Design

April 15, 2004, Thursday, 1:30pm-5:00pm
Optimizing Photoshop and Illustrator as Imaging Tools

April 16, 2004 Friday, 9:30am-4:30pm (Whole day)
Learning how to make Interactive Websites using Multimedia Tools

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1st PC World Phils Annual Awards

ALL ROADS will lead to Dusit Hotel Nikko on March 26 for all technocrats and technology-driven individuals as Media G8way Corp. and PC World Philippines unveil the most outstanding information technology products of 2003 in the 1st PC World Philippines Annual Awards.

Aimed to highlight and give recognition to the best IT products in terms of performance (benchmarks scores), features and design, ease of use, packaging, support, and price, the Annual Awards will hand out the Best IT Product Awards, to those which have passed the stringent qualifications set by the judging committee, and, Users' Choice Awards for the top pick coming from the readers of *PC World Philippines*.

The 1st PCW Annual Awards happens on March 26 at 6:30 p.m. in Ballroom A & B of Dusit Hotel Nikko. For ticket reservations, please call Ann Casihan at 8128401-03 loc. 149.

Sponsors for the 1st PCW Annual Awards are Chase Technologies Corp., Epson Phils. Corp., JITSE-Phil. Foundation Inc., Kodak Phils. Ltd., Mocomtech Phils. Inc., OpenS2 Corp., Topnotch Group Corp., and Xitrix Computer Corp. Official media sponsors are *Computerworld Philippines*, *Enterprise*, *Fast Forward*, ITNetcentral and Phil. Daily Inquirer.

4th Kapihang EntrePinoy: "The Future of Entrepreneurship in the Hands of Future Leaders"

IS entrepreneurship one of the priority programs of our future leaders? How much do we know about globalization?

These issues will be addressed during the 4th Kapihang EntrePinoy set on March 26, 8am to 5pm at the Senden Hall of the Asian Social Institute in Malate.

Political parties have sent the following leaders to present their programs on entrepreneurship and discuss with the different micro and small entrepreneurs and non-government organizations the future of their businesses: K4, Presidential Chief of Staff Rigoberto Tiglao; Bangon Pilipinas, Former NEDA Executive Director Cielito Habito; Aksyon Demokratiko, Mr. Facundo Roco; Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino and LDP are yet to name their representatives. Mr. Angelo Palmones, Station Manager of DZMM will synthesize and moderate the proceedings.

Kapihang EntrePinoy is a well-attended quarterly business forum organized by the Center for Small Entrepreneurs. It aims to gather micro and small entrepreneurs and impart in them relevant business information.

Should you wish to be part of this momentous event, please register at the entrepreneurship service hotlines at (02) 523-9776 / 524-1879, mobile no. 0916-303-7443 or email: cse@pacific.net.ph or visit our website: www.csentrepinoy.org. Registration is at P300.00 (with snacks and Certificate of Participation to those attending the entire business forum).

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— 2 Corinthians 5:8

The interment of the late

ROSARIO LAHOZ TONGSON

will be at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City,
on Sunday, March 21, 2004 after the 2:00 p.m. Mass.

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• DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT • MESSAGE OF THANKS
• DEATH ANNIVERSARY • REQUIEMS

MESSAGE OF THANKS

His wife, **NATY**, daughter **GERALDINE**, sister, nephews and nieces, relatives and friends of the late

COL. GERONIMO A. DANGO

who joined his creator on
March 4, 2004

wish to convey their heartfelt gratitude to all those who comforted and condoled with them, offered masses and prayers, sent flowers and cards of sympathy, visited and kept vigil, attended the funeral rites and who in various ways helped them in their time of bereavement.

Ma. Dulce C. Roa

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord
on March 14, 2004.

She will be missed by her husband **Eric**; son **Dustin**, and her family and friends.

Her remains lie in state at Chapel 1, St. Alphonsus De Liguori Church, Magallanes Village, Makati City.

Interment will be on Sunday, March 21, 2004 at the Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque City.

We remember our loved one to have lived his Life according to these lines:

"I expect to pass this world but once
Any good thing therefore that I can do,
or any kindness I can show to my fellowmen
Let me do it now
Let me not defer or neglect it
For I shall not pass this way again"

In Loving Memory

On the 21st Death Anniversary of

CONRADO C. ALCANTARA

who passed away on March 19, 1983

Mrs. Ladislawa I. Alcantara and family invite relatives and friends to share in the offering of the Holy Mass tomorrow for the eternal repose of his soul at the following:

Manila Memorial Park, Sucat Paranaque	3:30pm
Our Mother of Perpetual Help, Baclaran, Pasay City	6:45am
St. Alphonsus Mary de Liguori, Magallanes, Makati	12:45pm & 6:00pm
Santuario de San Antonio Parish, Makati	6:00pm
Sta. Clara Parish, P. Burgos, Pasay City	6:00pm
San Roque Parish Church, Cabrera St., Pasay City	6:00pm
San Juan Nepomuceno Parish, Pasay City	6:00pm
Carmelite Monastery Church, Lanang, Davao City	6:00am
San Pablo Parish, Matina, Davao City	6:00am
San Pedro Cathedral, San Pedro Street, Davao City	12:00nn
Our Lady of the Assumption Chapel, C. Alcantara & Sons, Inc. Compound Lanang, Davao City	3:15pm
San Isidro Labrador Chapel, Sto. Nino, Talaingod, Davao del Norte	5:00pm
St. Jude Parish, Malvar Street, Davao City	5:30pm
Redemptorist Church, J. P. Laurel Ave., Davao City	5:30pm
Sta. Ana Church, Sta. Ana Avenue, Davao City	5:30pm
Assumption Church, F. Torres Street, Davao City	5:45pm
Immaculate Conception Chapel, Buayan, Alabel, Sarangani Province	4:00pm
San Roque Parish Church, Kiwalan, Iligan City	.6:00am
Lugait Parish Church, Lugait Misamis Oriental	5:30pm

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Next gov't must cut deficit, says BSP chief

THE NEXT government must act immediately to narrow the budget deficit, the central bank governor said, warning that its debt could otherwise become "unsustainable" within three years.

The winner of the May 10 presidential elections must pass legislation quickly to raise revenue through measures such as reducing corruption at revenue agencies, higher alcohol taxes and a new tax on mobile phone messaging, said Bangko Sentral Governor Rafael Buenaventura.

The next government should also privatize the power industry within a year to get that sector's massive debts and costs off the public books, he said.

"We've got to start showing now that we can get (the budget deficit) to zero by 2009 and if we don't meet our target this year...then clearly they're going to say, 'These jokers aren't going to make it to 2009,'" Buenaventura said.

Interest payments on debt, including more than $60 billion of international borrowings, swallowed almost a third of government spending in January, contributing to a budget deficit that diverts funds from vital development projects.

The Macapagal administration plans to cut the budget deficit to 4.2 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) this year from 4.6 percent last year, with the aim of balancing its books by 2009.

The Philippines, Asia's largest sovereign debt issuer outside Japan, has run deficits for 10 of the last 14 years, worrying analysts who say the country could eventually find itself in a debt crisis.

In an interview, Buenaventura also said he could probably avoid raising interest rates for as long as six months. He expected the peso to recover to 53-54 to $1 after the election, from current levels. The internationally respected governor is seen by diplomats as a steadying hand on the Southeast Asian economy, which is struggling to grow strongly enough to alleviate poverty and create jobs for its swelling population.

The next government must "really address the budget deficit, because that is the one that is going to give us an unsustainable debt profile three years down the road," he said.

All the presidential candidates agreed on this, he added.

The winner would need to act quickly to pass legislation such as privatizing the Bureau of Internal Revenue or offering incentives to cut corruption there that resulted in heavy leakage of tax collections and widespread evasion.

Opinion polls show a close fight for the presidency between film actor Fernando Poe Jr and incumbent Macapagal-Arroyo, who rose from vice president after "People Power" protests ousted leader Joseph Estrada in 2001.

Reuters

BUENAVENTURA

Politics stunts power sector growth

THE "HIGHLY POLITICIZED" decisions of industry regulators have prevented investors from infusing money into the capital-intensive power sector, a local power industry executive said.

According to First Generation Holdings Corp. president and chief operating officer Federico Lopez, the government usually intervened in regulatory matters, which added to "confusion and unpredictability" in the power sector.

Instead of attracting new capital, he said certain government decisions on power industry contracts drove away prospective investors and made those who already had investments here think twice about putting in more money in power projects.

"The threat of contract review and renegotiation are spooking lenders and investors. It must be recognized that contracts hold a project together. New projects are not possible if there are doubts," he said.

The government last year conducted renegotiations and reviews of various contracts with independent power producers (IPPs).

Another obstacle to attracting new investors, Lopez said, was the "weak credit worthiness" of utilities and cooperatives—the country's main buyers of power.

Distribution utility Manila Electric Co., also a Lopez-led firm, has had nine credit rating downgrades over the past four years.

Lopez pointed out that the government's mandate for power utilities to grant subsidies to consumers was weakening these firms' financial condition, making it difficult for these firms to get contracts for new capacity.

Under Meralco's inter-class cross-subsidy scheme, its extra-large industrial customers paid an extra 63 centavos per kilowatt-hour (kWh) to subsidize household and small industrial clients.

Republic Act No. 9136 or the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (EPIRA) provides for the removal of these cross-subsidies within three years of the effectivity of the law.

Abigail L. Ho

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Editor **Cesar D. Mangawang**

THE X3 can also be defined as the marriage of lifestyle and motoring. With trainer Fritz Lanio are, from left, Mega Magazine's Liza Ilarde, Elbert Cuenca, Lifestyle Asia's J. Lorraine Belmonte, Zee Lifestyle Magazine Cebu's Debbie Enriquez, C!'s Kevin Limjoco, Georges Ramirez, Kenny Kintal, BusinessWorld's Jude Morte, BMW's Lito German and the writer.

TRACK DAY WITH BMW X3

Mini-me, I shrunk the X5

By Tessa R. Salazar

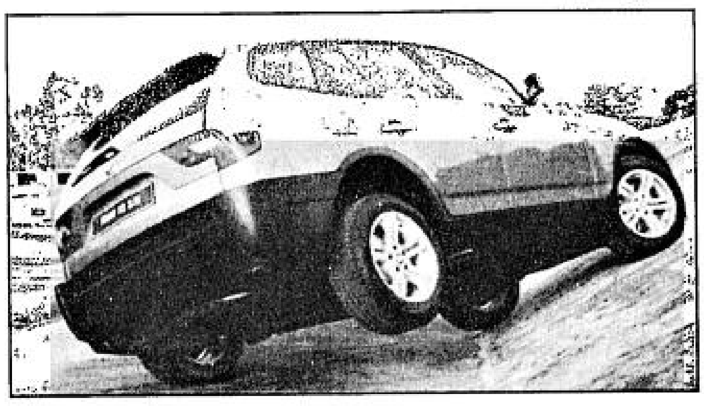
> Performance drivers say the X3 proved stable in its trajectory, the rear wheels not going into a spin

HAVE you ever wished your favorite American- or European-sized brand of shirt and jeans could have been just a few sizes smaller to fit your Asian physique?

BMW may not exactly be an apparel brand to fit as an example, but this European carmaker has done just that—zapping its fierce BMW X5 down to size enough for us smaller brothers and sisters in the East to floor the pedal and enjoy the full view behind the windshields—and not be roadhogs while at it.

For those who were impressed enough with the sports activity vehicle BMW X5 that it made you reach for your checkbooks, hold it for just a second. You may also want to consider the smaller and lighter version, the X3.

A STEEP ascent dumbfounds. The X3 climbs on all fours with trainer Fritz Lanio



MASTER of balance, the X3 stands on three wheels.

First-crack ride

Local motoring journalists got a first-crack ride of two preproduction 2.5-liter SAV X3s that looked exactly like Mini-me versions of the X5 at the Subic International Race Track.

But this version was undoubtedly a more hyperactive sister. Stunt driver and trainer Fritz Lanio had a blue X3 stand only on three wheels, then made it ascend a steep 30-degree slope. Of course, we enjoyed this "circus" and then proceeded to "pet" and "ride" this animal ourselves on slaloms and straightaways.

The hyperactive blue one had a sport suspension and 18-inch tires for a firmer hold on the road. Then we ran a silver X3 that was a bit more docile with its softer suspension and 17-inch tires, which would provide for a more comfy ride.

Many of us forgot that we were on an SAV and sometimes took on curves and ran around pylons recklessly. Well, who's to blame for making us think we were driving a BMW sedan?

The two X3s, in fact proved swifter and more ideal for tighter cornering than the bulkier X5s. The steering, we found out, was more precise, and overall, the X3 was more agile—perfect for this country's unpredictable road conditions.

C! Magazine's Kenneth Quintal and Kevin Limjoco obviously seemed to enjoy themselves as they constantly bantered with each other on the CB radio during the slaloms, while performance drivers Georges Ramirez, Chuck Montecillo and Speed Magazine's Manny delos Reyes did short work of the track.

The women were raving as well. "The X3 can get you out of a difficult situation," said Lifestyle Asia's Sari Yap, who added that she loved driving it because it made her feel more confident on the road. "The feeling was so different when I was driving the X3, I felt totally in control, as if nothing bad would happen. If I had a choice, I would have that as my car."

Lifestyle Asia's Lorraine Belmonte, who could have been mistaken for BMW Philippines president Mark Gilbert's sister, said she felt confident "attacking" the slaloms with the X3.

TITLE/C2

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Toyota and Ford: Hybrid allies

AS EARLY as last year, Ford Motor Co. announced that a hybrid version of its 2005 Escape compact sport utility vehicle would be launched before summer 2004 ends in the United States. But few outside the industry knew that Ford would be using the hybrid technology of Toyota Motor Co. until last week, when the two carmakers announced an agreement whereby Toyota will license to Ford its patented Toyota Hybrid System (THS).

In a hybrid vehicle, an electric motor supplements the internal combustion engine and takes over at low speeds and at stoplights, resulting in improved fuel economy and less pollution. The battery for the electric motor, which is under warranty for eight years or more, is recharged as the vehicle is driven, so it does not have to be plugged in. Toyota pioneered in hybrid drivetrain development when it introduced the world's first mass-produced hybrid vehicle, the Prius compact car, in 1997. With the agreement, Ford will be the first US auto manufacturer to come up with a hybrid vehicle and the first in the world to produce a hybrid SUV although Toyota plans to follow with a hybrid version of the Lexus RX330 SUV in November or December and a hybrid Highlander SUV next year.

Big deal

The Toyota-Ford hybrid agreement is a big deal for Toyota since it has been trying to sell the THS to other automakers to help offset the high development cost. Two years ago, Toyota clinched a similar pact with Nissan Motor Co. which plans to sell hybrid vehicles in the US by 2006. The deals with Ford and Nissan establish Toyota as the leader in hybrid technology, auto industry analysts say.

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

Toyota and Honda Motor Co. have been the only car manufacturers selling mass-market hybrid cars until now. Honda introduced a mass-produced two-seater hybrid vehicle, the Insight, in September 1999 and in October 2001 unveiled the 1.3-liter Civic Hybrid at the 35th Tokyo Motor Show. Honda plans to offer a gasoline-electric version of the Accord this year. A Japanese newspaper announced just the other week that Toyota plans to produce a hybrid version of the Camry, the Accord's arch rival, in 2006. With hybrid versions of the Accord and the Camry in the market, hybrid technology will be going mainstream. Aside from the Prius, Toyota is selling hybrid variants of its minivans, the Estima (known here as the Previa) and the Alphard, in Japan.

FORD will launch a hybrid version of the 2005 Escape by September in the United States.

2M hybrids

However, hybrid vehicles are not major contributors to Toyota's profits because of their high cost of development, relatively low sales volumes (only 53,000 hybrid vehicles were sold by Toyota last year, representing less than one percent of its global sales of 6.07 million vehicles), and higher retail prices compared to conventional gasoline-powered cars. Nonetheless, the THS-powered cars are gaining ground. Demand for the 2004 1.5-liter Prius, which gets 35.5 km per liter and ultra-low emissions and can outperform 2.0-liter gasoline engines, has been stronger than Toyota expected. In 10 years, Toyota plans to sell two million hybrid vehicles a year worldwide.

How much fuel will the hybrid variant of the Escape save? In city driving, Ford projects an average of 35 to 40 miles per gallon for the front-wheel-drive hybrid Escape compared with the 19 miles per gallon of the gasoline-only Escape. But on the highway, the Escape hybrid's fuel savings will not be as dramatic, getting 29 to 31 miles per gallon compared with the 25 miles per gallon of the gasoline version. But that is still better than the fuel economy of light cars in the United States, which averaged 24.4 miles per gallon while SUVs averaged 17.3 miles per gallon.

The hybrid agreement signed recently with Ford seems to signal another spectacular year for Toyota. Last month, Toyota announced a 60 percent surge in net profit to US$2.72 billion for the third quarter ending Dec. 31 and confirmed that it was headed for record full-year earnings—although it failed to overtake Ford as the world's second biggest automaker by sales volume despite record-setting unit sales in 2003. Last month, Toyota increased sales by 18 percent in North America, where it gets about 70 percent of its operating profit, while in January it led Japan's car manufacturers in overseas production gains with a 30 percent jump to 233,188 units.

Most recommended

And, to top it all, 21 Toyota models made it to Consumer Reports' list of recommended vehicles sold in the US, the most ever for an automaker. Honda was a distant second with 11 models on the list and General Motors was third with 10. Vehicles from Toyota, including the Camry car and Tundra pickup, represented more than a fourth of the 82 models recommended in the April issue of America's leading consumer magazine. Toyota's Lexus RX330 was picked as the best mid-size SUV and the Toyota Sienna as best minivan. In fact, Consumer Reports recommended all but one of 22 Toyota models it tested. Only the Tacoma pickup was not endorsed because it tipped up on two wheels in a government road test. *(With reports from The New York Times, Bloomberg News and The Asian Wall Street Journal.)*

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: Talk only if you can improve the silence.

* * *

(E-mail comments to asevilla@inquirer.com.ph.)

U-Turn slot has become an overkill

I READ in the papers that Makati City Mayor Jojo Binay wants the MMDA (Metropolitan Manila Development Authority) abolished.

Binay's reason: The MMDA had been allegedly performing functions without proper coordination with the local government units of Metro Manila.

"The agency (MMDA) should enact its own laws for the benefit of Metro Manila," said Binay. "What the MMDA has been doing all along is implement laws that are now being coordinated with the Metro Mayors Council."

Binay said the MMDA "is merely the coordinating body which is largely dependent on the Metro Manila mayors for the implementation of its various programs."

* * *

If what I read was true, I am not surprised by Binay's move at all. Because Binay had headed the MMDA himself (1998-2000), he knew all along the fakeness of the MMDA. Why it is only now that he's had the courage to call for the abolition of the MMDA is what boggles the mind.

My question is, if indeed the MMDA had been performing functions deemed illegal, why don't Binay and his fellow Metro Manila mayors hale MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando to court?

For one, Fernando and his ilk had done a lot of damage already, like the indiscriminate cutting of trees in the city. For another, Fernando had gone out of bounds, if not his mind, as to build numerous U-Turn slots as though these island-holes are the real key to the solution of the metropolis' traffic mess.

FULL TANK

Al Mendoza

* * *

The U-Turn slot can only be good to a certain extent. But its proliferation even on tight roads like Quezon Avenue has become more of a problem than a solution to our traffic woes.

The indiscriminate erection of the U-Turn slot has deteriorated into an overkill that almost every day, we see accidents happening in these U-Turn slots. Why because many of them are either unmanned by traffic enforcers or simply too unnecessarily built and therefore miserably misplaced. Seemingly, Fernando has made building the U-Turn slot a fetish, if not his own personal toy.

Even the overpass at Edsa-Quezon Avenue has been rendered inutile because of the two U-Turn slots underneath, which have been the daily cause of traffic snarls there.

* * *

Isn't it soul-uplifting to know that the Mild Seven Renault F1 Team chose a prestigious Italian opera theater in Palermo, Sicily, as the venue to launch the R24, the new race car that is expected to power the team to more podium finishes throughout the 18-race 2004-2005 Grand Prix season?

I got a report from my buddy, Anjo Perez, that the Renault F1 Team is really all out this year to do wonders in the Formula One season. Listen to Anjo:

"Along with the public unveiling of the new hardware before an audience of about 650 international journalists and special guests, team officials said that Mild Seven Renault would aim to finish among the top three in the constructor championship."

* * *

Said Renault CEO Patrick Faure: "We must look to dislodge at least one of the teams above us in the championship. One can no longer just talk about the top three teams. Last year, we became part of the Big Four."

Veteran Jarno Trulli of Italy and Fernando Alonso of Spain will man the Mild Seven Renault Fl Team, aided by test driver Franck Montagny. The three had logged 5,000 km last winter while developing the new machine.

The Mild Seven Renault Fl Team returned to the fold only in 2002 after an absence of 17 years. The comeback bid had done wonders already: fourth in 2002 and five podium finishes in 2003.

* * *

I was lucky to have witnessed three Formula 1 races already and I've seen the greats like Michael Schumacher and Rubens Barrichello, both in action and in the flesh. Alonso and Trulli, too.

Alonso made it to the podium thrice last year in the Malaysian, Brazilian and Spanish GPs while scoring an astounding first place victory in Hungary. Trulli finished third in Germany.

"Our targets for this year are to place higher. We have all the ingredients necessary to fight at the highest level. I don't think we will be fighting for the title in 2004, but I definitely think that we can finish the season in the top three. We are confident we will attain this target from Melbourne onward," Faure said.

* * *

As early as March of last year, a full year before the start of the 2004 season, project engineers of the Mild Seven Renault Team have prioritized reliability in the development of the RS24 engine. Beginning with the 2004 season, Fl teams will be allowed to use only one engine per weekend. This is quite a daunting engineering feat considering that a single engine must last through practice and qualifying rounds, all the way to the race proper.

From the outside, the new car can be distinguished by a taller engine cover. This is because the R24 uses a steeper 72 degree V10 engine compared to the wide 111 degree Vi 0 engine that powered the R23B race car last year. As a result, the center of gravity of the R24 is 10 millimeters higher than the R23B; however, the R24 is engineered so that it can generate more down force than the R23B.

ALONSO: regarded as the fastest rising star in F1 racing

Among the other revisions on the R24 are a rear wing that is composed only of two upper elements in accordance with 2004 regulations, new materials used in the suspension and a smaller fuel tank.

"This new car shows clearly that Mild Seven Renault is a top team, not only through our results, but also in how we work. We are taking big steps forward, and hitting our targets. My aim is to be able to compete for the title in 2005. We will be ready," said team managing director Falvio Briatore.

* * *

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What Drives You CALTEX

Mini-me, I shrunk the X5

From page C1

Disguised as a coupé

The X3's dynamics and behavior may well be a BMW trademark, but the external appearance is an SAV disguised as a coupé. The latest BMW models, such as the X3, bear a new design philosophy, particularly seen on the sculptured body. The windows are quite high but the lines are created for a more sleek and sporty appeal.

From the back, the tailgate has been made from one piece instead of two. And if you open it up, there's enough room underneath. The X3, surprisingly, has 15 more liters in cargo capacity at 480 than the X5's 465. How so? The X3 has a lower floor.

The X3 also weighs 300 kg less than the X5. It is 41mm shorter compared to the X5, which is 1,715mm high. The X3's width is 193 mm less than the X5's 2,180mm. Its wheelbase is nearly an inch shy of the X5's.

Horsepower also varies. The X5 3-liter diesel, for instance, has 218 hp versus the 2.5-L X3's 192. The X3's executive and SAV models have 17-inch tires (225 55 R70). Compare this to the X5 SAV's 17-incher (235 60 R17) and the Executive's 18-incher (255 55 R 18). We also heard, amid the din of engines, that the X3 variants to be offered in the Philippines would be the 3-liter and the 2.5-liter, both powered by gasoline.

X drive technology

According to performance drivers, the X3 proved stable in its trajectory, the rear wheels not going into a spin. The X Drive—the 4-wheel drive of BMW—also improved steering behavior, contributing greatly to the agility and safety features of the vehicle. Thus, the X3 remained responsive in the curves.

Compare this with vehicles that tend to understeer during curves. The driving force on the front axle, as Fritz Lanio put it, reduces lateral force. The vehicle steers less than the driver would wish and swings over the front axle out of the curve.

The tech team explained that the X Drive technology recognizes this tendency to understeer with its DSC sensors, or the dynamic stability control. The DSC absorbs the energy while the passengers are protected. It moves the driving force from the front to the rear axle. Driving characteristics are perfectly matched to the given situation proactively, before understeering can even occur.

Countersteering or intervening control systems stop the vehicle from sliding. It is also the X Drive that recognizes the tendency to oversteer even before the vehicle starts doing so. A multidisc clutch in a transfer case proactively directs more driving force onto the front axle. It is also the X Drive that creates a fixed connection between the axles and transfer clutch that prevents the rear wheels from spinning and from blocking changes.

There was, however, something missing in the BMW activity: the unpaved road. We would have delighted in testing the X3 on rough roads to really ascertain if the international press had been a little too "rough" on the X3 while in the rough. On this aspect, BMW Philippines president Mark Gilbert's reply was: Wait for 12 months and then see who's complaining. Until then, a more intimate encounter between the X3 and the motoring press out in the woods is due.

Will Total break up market domination of the Big 3?

By Charles E. Buban

WHEN Total Philippines Corp. decided to break into the scene in 1997 in time for the full deregulation of the downstream oil industry (with the passage of Republic Act 8479) the following year, all the company was hoping for was to achieve a modest profit in subsequent years.

However, many observers think that if there's one new player that could one day break up the Big Three oil firms' domination of the market, Total (Philippines) could be the one.

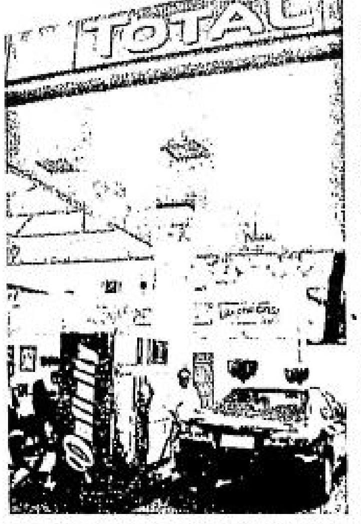
After all, Total Philippines is a subsidiary of French petroleum giant Total, the world's fourth largest oil and gas company that operates a 16,000-service station network in more than 120 countries.

Tapping its global network, Total Philippines is emerging as one of the strongest players in the local energy sector, offering world-class products and services to wholesale consumers in all industry sectors.

Committed to RP

Said Total Philippines manager for corporate affairs Rona Quejada: "Total is committed to this country. Since 1997, the company now has $80-million worth of infrastructure already in place, which includes state-of-the-art oil distribution terminal in Mariveles, Bataan and another at the Manila Harbor Center in Tondo, Manila."

The 9-hectare depot facility in Mariveles, Bataan, is considered one of the finest oil distribution facilities in all of Asia.



FROM AN INCREASING number of service stations here to key sponsorships abroad, Total is making its presence felt.

"It has a storage capacity of 50-million liters of fuel and can accommodate up to 40,000-DWT oil tankers. It is also equipped with the best sophisticated safety systems," described Quejada.

9M liters of fuel

The terminal at the Manila Harbor Center, on the other hand, has a storage capacity of 9 million liters of fuel, ensuring continuous supply of petroleum products to its growing clientele nationwide.

With its acquisition of Superkalan Gaz Corp., Total Philippines now dominates the 2.7-kilo and 5.5-kilo cylinder market for LPGs nationwide.

If fact, despite Total Philippines posting losses last year—because of rising world oil prices and its inability to pass on to consumer higher acquisition costs of oil products—the company is still set to start construction of a $2.5-million (about P141 million) service station in the South Luzon Expressway.

Tollway project

The tollway project is part of the company's capital expenditure program for last year and this year and is set to start this month.

The SLEX service station is expected to be finished July. It is not yet included to the 15 service stations Total (Philippines) is scheduled to put up this year to beef up its 62 existing stations.

These 15 new stations will be mostly located in Central Luzon and Metro Manila.

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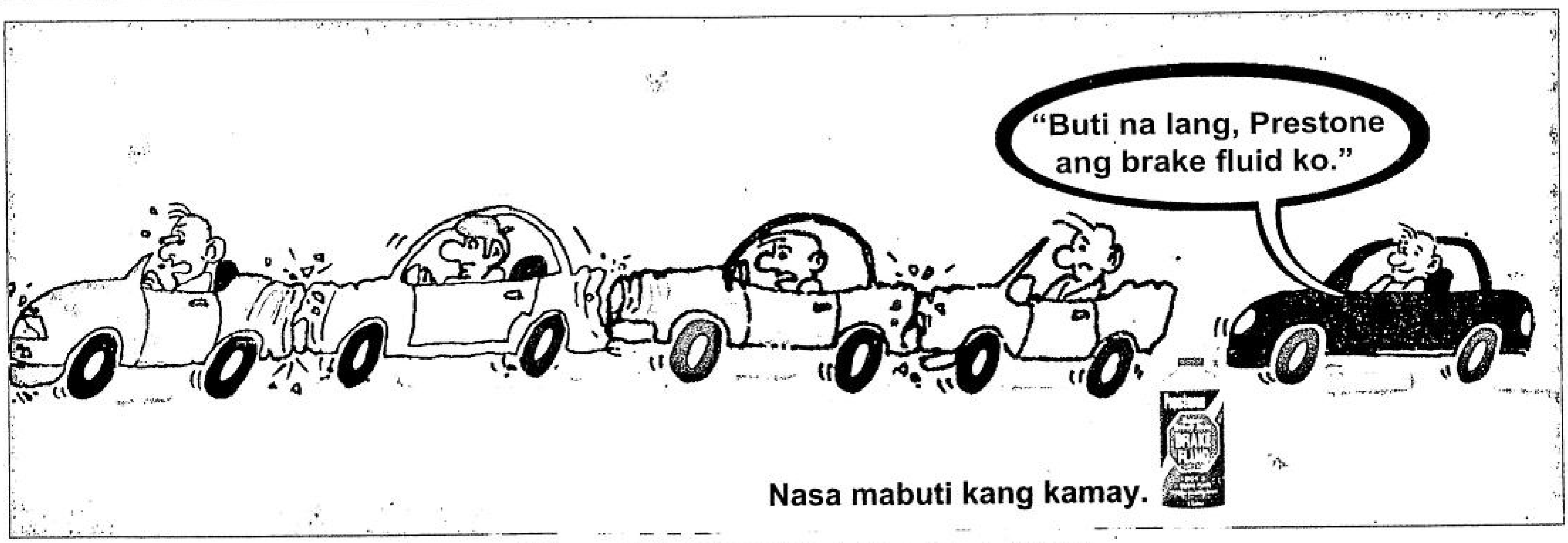
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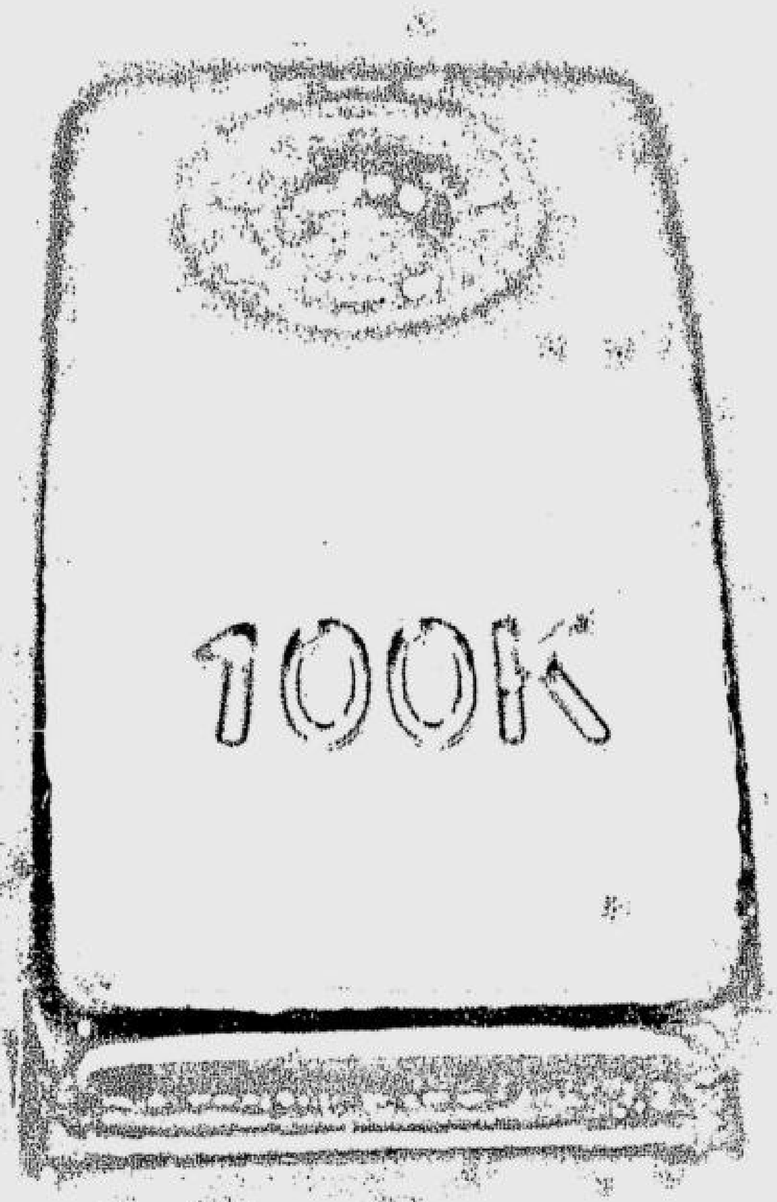

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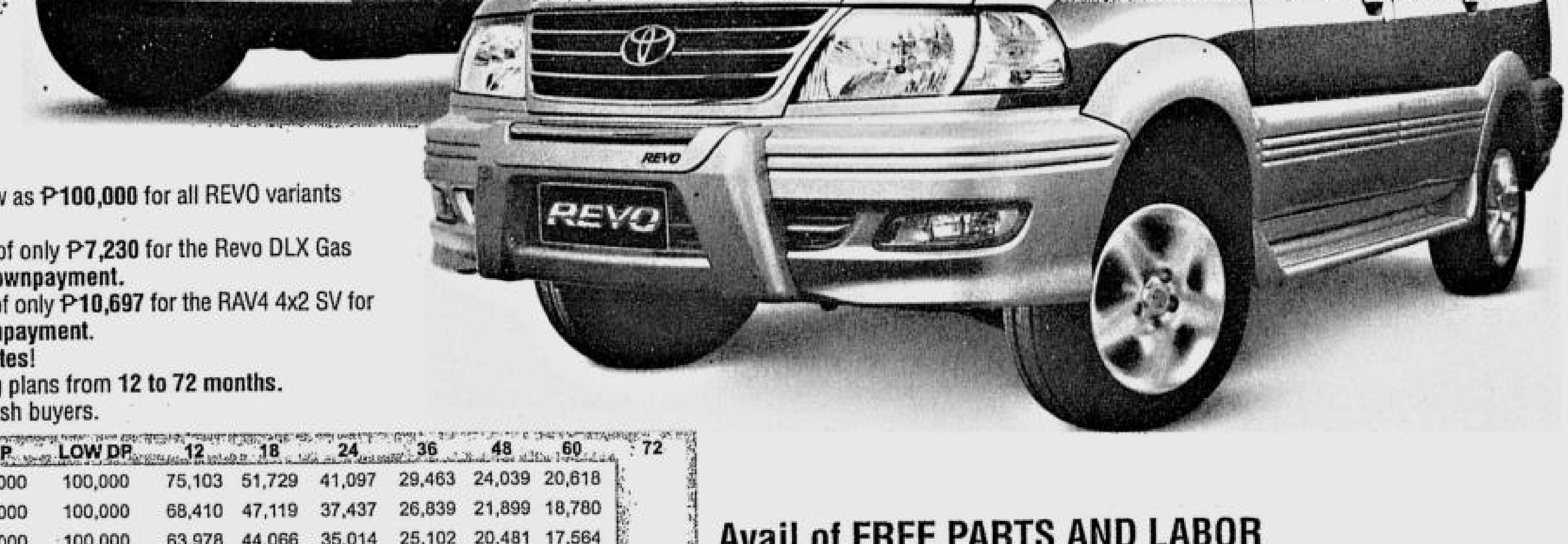

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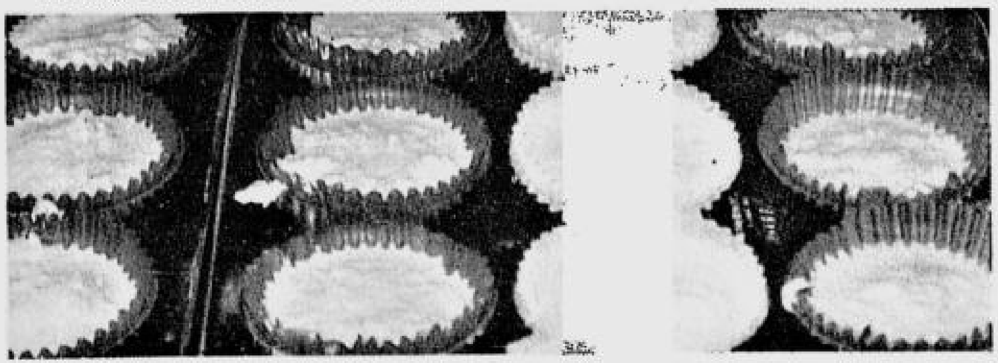
Editor **Chelo Banal-Formoso**

MONDAY **ARTS** ● TUESDAY **FITNESS** ● WEDNESDAY **2BU** ●
THURSDAY **FOOD** ● FRIDAY **HOME & FASHION** ● SUNDAY **SURPRISES**



PASTEL de Elote can also be baked in muffin pans. Note that even the muffin cake liners are in the Mexican colors of red, white and green.

Olé for Mexican cuisine

Text and photos by Eufemia C. Estrada
Contributor

IF all you know about Mexican cooking are tacos and beans, you have a lot to learn from Silvia Inoue, a Mexican by birth and married to a Japanese national, who whips up dishes of both Mexican and Japanese provenance.

In a recent cooking demonstration for mothers and househelp at the Narra Center in Las Piñas hosted by the Home Management Group, Silvia presented a red, white and green menu of Mexican cuisine.

These colors of the Mexican flag dominate typical Mexican food, Silvia says. Red is represented by tomatoes, white by white onions and green by chilies and coriander.

Mexicans use tomatoes with fish, beef or chicken, sometimes blanched and peeled as in the Albondigas dish, or unpeeled and unseeded as in the salsas.

It is easy to cook Mexican food in the Philippines, Silvia says, because the ingredients are readily available and reasonably priced.

Chicharon is usually served with a vinegar dip in the Philippines, but Mexicans make it into an appetizing salad with chopped tomatoes and onions and coriander (red, white and green), with a dash of lemon and salt.

For her Salpicon de Chicharon, good for six, Silvia used Chicharitos in fingerling sizes.

Because the *chicharon* loses its crispiness when mixed with the tomatoes and onions, the dish must be mixed just before serving.

For 12 *quesadillas*, Silvia sautéed 150 g of ground pork and equal amount of beef in garlic, chopped onions, chopped red and green pepper. She filled each of the tortillas with the cooked meat, topped them with mozzarella cheese and baked them in a moderate oven till the cheese melted. The *quesadillas* were served cut up in four triangles.

For the frijoles, a Mexican staple food, pinto beans are preferred, but Silvia finds red kidney beans quite acceptable.

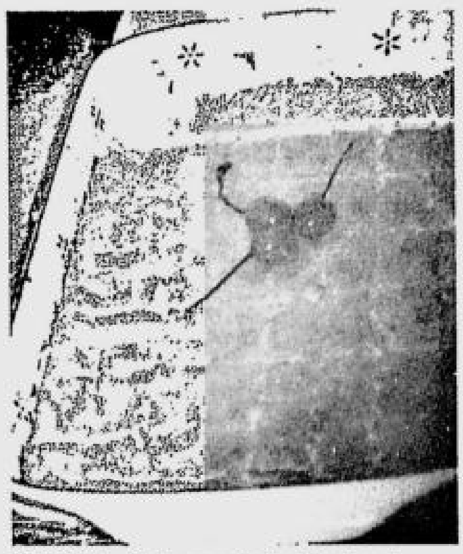
Housewives should not be intimidated by Mexican cuisine. Silvia herself knew nothing about Mexican cooking until she left her Mexico City job as a weekly columnist on environmental education with El Nacional.

After four years on the job, she joined her parents in Campeche where her mother, alarmed at her lack of cooking skills, promptly put her in charge of the family kitchen and taught her all about Mexican cooking.

One of the lessons she learned was to use only enough cooking oil to cover the bottom and sides of the cooking pan when sauteing (frying) Mexican dishes.

Now don't ask why the corn kernels in the Pastel de Elote have to be beaten in two

OLÉ/D4



PASTEL de Elote can also be baked and served in a 13 x9" serving dish.

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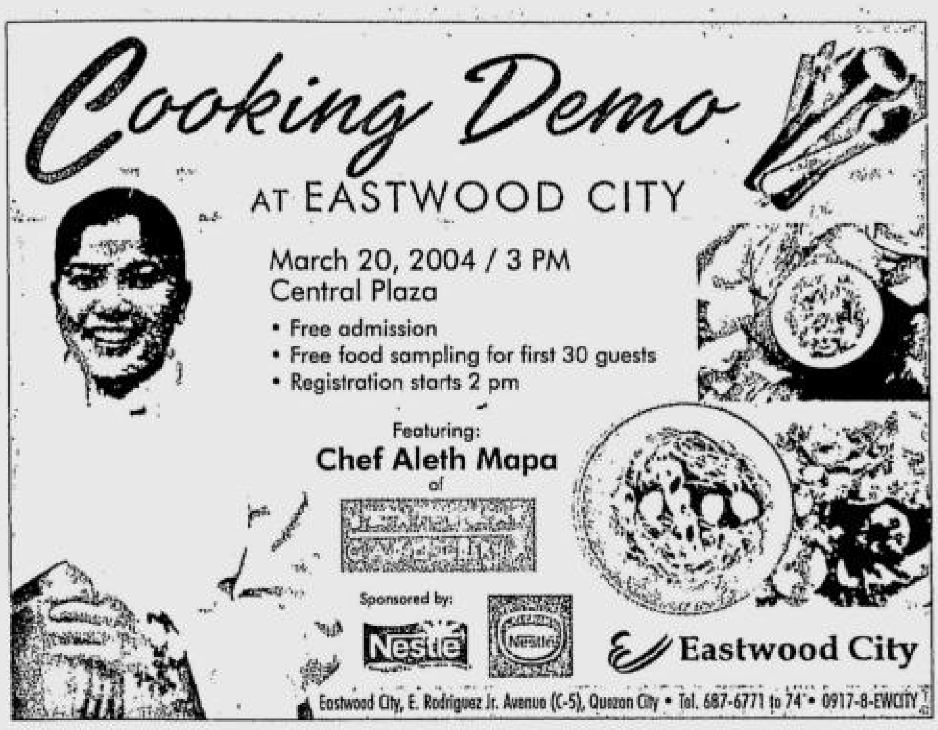

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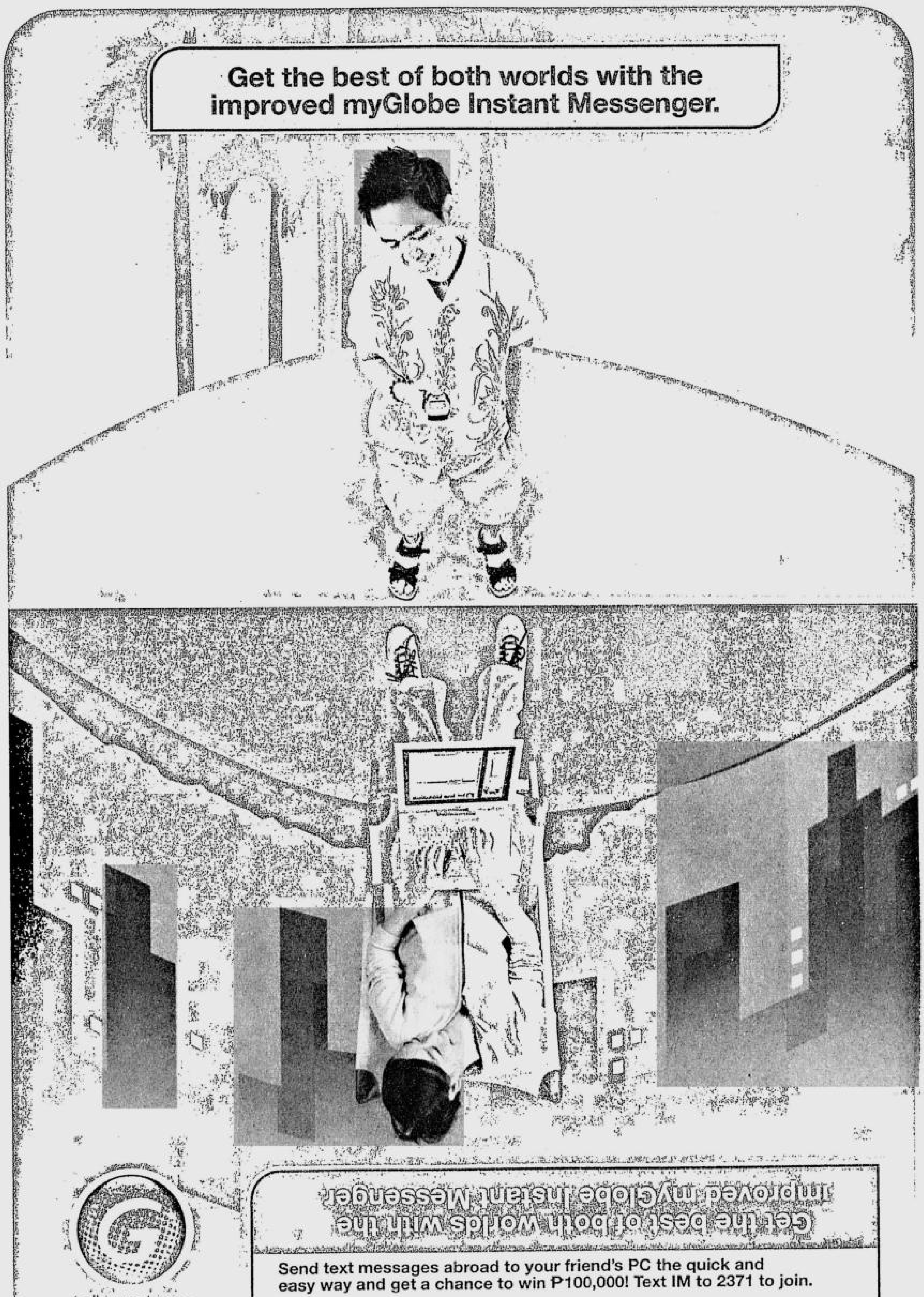

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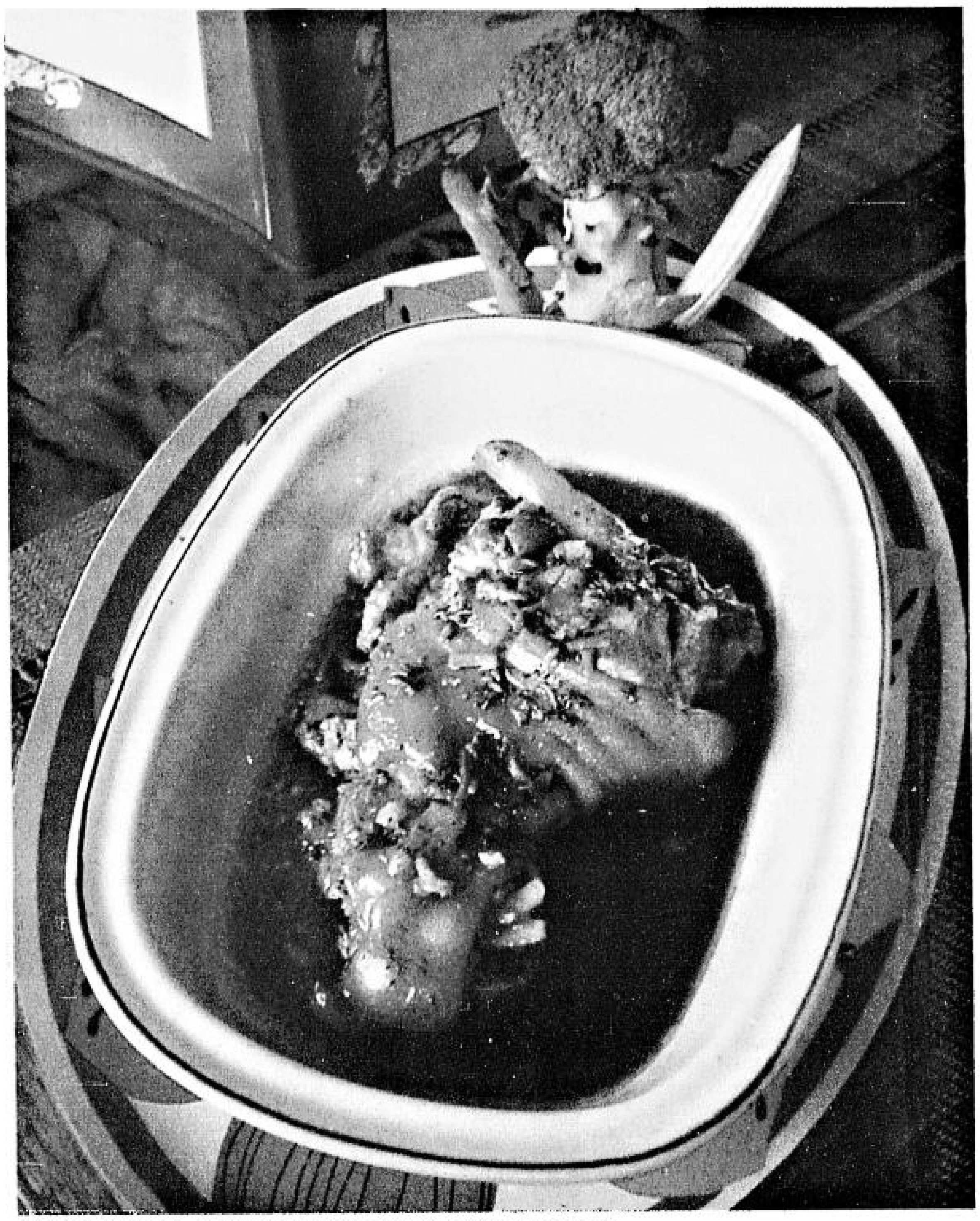
CARLOS and Malou Callejo



NUDILLO de Cerdo—boiled pig knuckles cooked in Carlos' special sauce

Hot Spanish food in breezy Tagaytay

Carlos Callejo put up his restaurant as a tribute to his wife's excellent cooking, which nourished him back to health

RELLENO de Pollo—stuffed chicken cooked in chorizo, paprika and herbs

By Lynett A. Villariba

IN THE CASTILLAN setting he created in Las Brisas de Tagaytay, Carlos Callejo looks more like the man from La Mancha than a Spanish-Filipino restaurateur. That is because he had just emerged triumphant from a quixotic battle with liver cancer.

Callejo survived the death sentence he got from his doctors who diagnosed him with the disease in 1999. His weapons? A positive outlook, the power of faith combined with neo-medicine.

He gives credit to his modern-day Dulcinea, the former Malou Pabalan, who stayed with him through thick and thin for 25 years, encouraged him to fight and "showed the way back to God."

In thanksgiving, aside from performing apostolic work for patients in the same situation, the reformed Catholic put up Restaurante Carlos as a tribute to his wife's excellent cooking, which nourished him back to health. Malou Callejo truly showed that the way to a man's heart—and health—is through his stomach.

Malou honed her culinary talents in the Castillan tradition of gathering for Sunday meals, perfecting the Spanish *cocido*—a mix of chicken, pork and beef cooked in chorizo. She acknowledges the influence of her maternal grandmother, Lolita Tronqued-Fronstroller, whose *cocido*, *paella* and *relleno* are the family's benchmark for perfect Spanish cooking.

Now Malou offers the home cooking her family loves to Tagaytay visitors.

She plans the menu for the recently opened restaurant (tel. 0917-9514393), helping customize an excellent Spanish dinner for two or a feast for a traveling group of up to 60. She picks only the freshest ingredients from nearby organic farms and uses extra virgin olive oil from Iberian orchards. She also bakes her own must-have cheesecake for dessert, a just-right delight even for the diet-conscious.

ARROZ a la Cubana (upper dish)—Spanish way of cooking minced meat served with rice and *saba* banana; Callos (lower)—an all-time favorite

Restaurante Carlos sits in the middle of a villas-for-rent compound aptly named Las Brisas de Tagaytay just off the Mendez crossing. The place, which is also home to the Callejo couple, offers bed-and-breakfast facilities for transients (call 046-4131132 or fax 046-4131130).

The Callejos had taken a long journey from Bilbao, Spain, where they originated, to Bacolod, where Carlos grew up, to Alabang where he lived it up, to American hospitals, after his illness was diagnosed.

Now they have settled down amid the breezy hills of Tagaytay to heal and defy the doctors' forecasts.

Mongolian madness

SAN Miguel Purefoods Culinary Center shows you how to cook and set up a Mongolian feast that will surely earn you more than just a passing mark.

For more party recipes and other helpful tips from San Miguel Purefoods Culinary Center, visit www.mygreatfood.com or send a self-addressed stamped envelope to San Miguel Purefoods Culinary Center, Legaspi corner Eagle Streets, Barrio Ugong, Pasig City.

Mongolian Barbecue

(good for 25 pax)

The bar:

Arrange the rest of the ingredients for the bar in serving dishes, buffet style. Prepare single-serve bowls for your guests' preparation.

Meat:

1 kg Monterey beef sirloin, sukiyaki cut

1 kg Monterey pork *kasim*, sukiyaki cut

1 kg Monterey pork *tocino*, sliced into strips

1 kg Purefoods chicken balls, quartered

1 kg Magnolia chicken breast fillet, sliced into strips

1 kg white medium-size shrimps, shelled and deveined

1 kg squid, ink sacs removed, cleaned and sliced into rings

Vegetables and starches:

1 head cabbage (about 1 kg)
1 kg white onions, sliced
½ kg bean sprouts (*togue*)
½ kg julienned carrots
½ kg bell pepper slices
25 cups rice, plain, cooked

Sauces and spices:

Teriyaki sauce*
Sate sauce*
Barbecue sauce*
1 c toasted sesame seeds
1 c chopped spring onions
1 c minced garlic
1 c soy sauce
1 c brown sugar
1 c sesame oil
½ c grated ginger
½ c chili garlic oil
Vegetable oil for stir frying
*See recipe

Barbecue sauce:

½ c brown sugar
4 cloves Taiwan garlic, crushed
½ tsp ground black pepper
½ tsp iodized salt
½ c tomato sauce
1 c Sprite
½ c soy sauce

Sate sauce:

½ c peanut butter
½ c soy sauce
1/3 c sherry
8 cloves Taiwan garlic, crushed
1 tbsp grated ginger
1/3 c brown sugar
1 c water

Teriyaki sauce:

1/3 c chopped white onions
3 tbsp grated ginger
1/3 c brown sugar
½ c soy sauce
2 tbsp honey
2 tbsp rice wine
2 tbsp Hoisin sauce
1 c water

Special sauces for your bar:

Combine each of the sauce ingredients in a saucepan. Let simmer until sugar has dissolved.

Transfer to serving bowls and set aside.

Bowl combinations:

Bowl assembly—In a bowl, combine meat and vegetables of your choice (about ½ cup). Add 1 cup of rice. Season with various prepared sauces and condiments. Refer to combinations below for your guide. (Guide combinations are based on 1 cup of rice and approximately ½ cup of total meat and vegetables.)

Heat oil in a griddle or skillet. Stir fry rice-meat mixture until meats are cooked through and ingredients are well blended. Serve immediately.

Variations on spaghetti

By Dorothy MJ Ferreria
Contributor

A PASTA dish is a complete meal by itself—the noodles provide carbohydrates and the ingredients in the sauce contain protein, iron, and other important nutrients.

Pasta can be served with bread sticks, toasted bread or garlic bread. For those with bigger budgets or more time in the kitchen, it can be easily paired off with a soup and a simple green salad. For dessert, a gelatin, flan or ice cream will do dressed up with fresh fruits and bottled chocolate sauce.

Pasta does not necessarily mean spaghetti with meat sauce. Here we have meatless spaghetti, spaghetti with tuna and spaghetti with chicken liver and bacon. Have a wonderful pasta week!

Meatless Spaghetti

½ c corn oil or olive oil
tbsp minced garlic
c chopped onions
c chopped celery stalk
½ c chopped carrots
c chopped sweet bell pepper
½ tsp dried oregano leaves
½ tsp dried basil leaves
½ c sliced canned button mushrooms
3 tbsp dark brown sugar
2 tbsp evaporated milk
¼ c water
500 g tomato sauce
¼ c grated cheddar cheese
Salt and pepper to taste
400 g raw spaghetti noodles cooked as package directs

Heat oil in a large saucepan. Sauté garlic, onions, celery, carrots and bell pepper in oil until onions are transparent. Then add dried herbs and mushrooms.

Continue to sauté until the herbs become fragrant. Then pour in sugar, milk, water, tomato sauce and cheddar cheese. Allow to boil and then simmer for 15 minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

In a large mixing bowl combine half of the sauce and all of the noodles. Transfer to a serving platter. Pour the remaining sauce over the noodles. Serve with additional grated cheese on the side.

Spaghetti with Tuna

¼ c corn oil or olive oil
1 tbsp minced garlic
½ tsp each dried basil and dried oregano leaves
¼ c chopped spring onions
1 c chopped tomatoes
2 cans tuna in brine (185 g each)
Salt and pepper to taste
200 g raw spaghetti noodles cooked as package directs

Sauté garlic in olive oil until fragrant. Add the dried herbs, spring onions and tomatoes. Continue to sauté until the tomatoes are wilted. Pour in the contents of two cans of tuna (including the liquid). Season with salt and pepper. Add the cooked noodles and toss to blend. Remove from heat and serve immediately.

Spaghetti with Chicken Liver and Bacon

¼ c corn oil or olive oil
1 tbsp minced garlic
½ c chopped onions
¼ kg bacon, sliced into ½-inch pcs
½ c chopped sweet bell pepper
¼ kg chicken liver, chopped
½ c sliced canned button mushrooms
400 g tomato sauce
Salt and pepper to taste
1 tsp each dried oregano and dried basil leaves
½ c grated cheddar cheese
300 g raw spaghetti noodles cooked as package directs

Sauté the garlic and onions in oil until the onions are wilted. Add the bacon and continue to cook until the bacon is limp. Add the bell pepper and sauté briefly. Then add the chicken liver and mushrooms. Continue to sauté until the liver is done. Pour in the tomato sauce, salt and pepper to taste, dried herbs and cheddar cheese. Allow to boil and then simmer for 5 minutes. Add the cooked noodles and mix well. Remove from heat and serve immediately with grated cheese on the side.

Dorothy MJ Ferreria offers cooking, baking and cake decorating classes at Dorothy's Cooking School in Quezon City and in key provincial cities. For classes in Subic this week, call (047) 2525040. For Manila classes, call 7217735 or e-mail dorothyferreria@skyinet.net.

Try sardine pasta for a change

FOR A DIFFERENT pasta experience, combine sardines and pasta. Try this recipe courtesy of Federici Pasta and Doña Elena sardines, both available at leading supermarkets.

Fusli Tricolori with Spicy Sardines Putanesca

1 pack 500-g Federici Fusilli Tricolore #40
4 tbsp Pietro Coricelli 100-percent pure olive oil
4 tbsp garlic, minced
1 c onions, minced
1 pc *sili labuyo*, chopped
4 pcs Doña Elena anchovies (canned)
2 tbsp Doña Maria Black Olives, sliced
1 tbsp Doña Maria Capers
3 cans Doña Elena Sardines in Tomato Sauce
1 c cheese, grated
4 tbsp basil, chopped
Salt and pepper to taste

Over medium heat on saucepan, sauté garlic, onions and *sili labuyo* in olive oil until golden brown. Add anchovies and cook for two minutes, then add olives and capers. Pour three cans of sardines and simmer for five minutes. Taste and adjust seasonings with salt and pepper, if necessary. Toss in pasta with the sauce and cook until properly mixed. Garnish with cheese and basil. Makes six to eight servings.

	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
MONDAY	French toast with butter and maple syrup Skinless *longganiza* Coffee, chocolate or iced tea Sliced bananas with yogurt	Coleslaw salad Breaded pork chop Rice Chilled star apple	Chicken *adobo* with pineapple tidbits Rice Gelatin with mango
TUESDAY	Cheese omelet Sardines in tomato sauce *Pandesal* Coffee, chocolate or hot tea Papaya with calamansi	Cream of mushroom soup Spaghetti with Tuna Garlic bread Chilled chico wedges with cream and condensed milk	Steamed fish with *tausi* Fried *tokwa* with *kuchay* and oyster sauce Rice or fried *bihon* Canned lychee with ice
WEDNESDAY	Oatmeal with bananas Pan-grilled ham Native cheese Loaf bread Coffee, chocolate or fruit juice	Chicken *afritada* Rice Melon ala mode	Beef salpicado Rice Leche flan
THURSDAY	Cereal and milk Toasted bread Butter, cheese and fruit jam Spanish sardines Coffee or chocolate Melon with calamansi	Mussel soup *Torta* with ground pork and potatoes Rice *Mais con hielo*	*Pancit bihon gisado* Shrimp tempura *Minatamis na saba* with evap and sago
FRIDAY	*Daing na bangus* Garlic rice Coffee, chocolate or iced tea Bananas with cottage cheese topping	*Monggo* soup Fried *tawilis* Rice Chilled star apple	Meatless Spaghetti Garlic bread Refrigerator cake
SATURDAY	*Ensaymada* or croissant Ham and cheese platter Coffee, chocolate or fresh fruit juice Fresh fruit platter	Beef *bulalo* with corn, *saba*, sweet potato and *pechay* Rice Sweetened garbanzos	Chicken barbecue Vegetable chop suey Java rice *Halo halo* bar
SUNDAY	Assorted *kakanin* Coffee, chocolate or tea	Spaghetti with Chicken Liver and Bacon Pork barbecue Buko salad with pineapple	Sauted squash with string beans Fried *tilapia* Rice Fresh fruit platter

Cuisine Explorers

The newest culinary destination is in Batangas City.

Chef Dennis Edillon of the Chateau 1771 Group of Restaurants presents Freestyle Asian Continental Cuisine at Hotel PonteFino's Pastorelli Restaurant.

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*introductory offer

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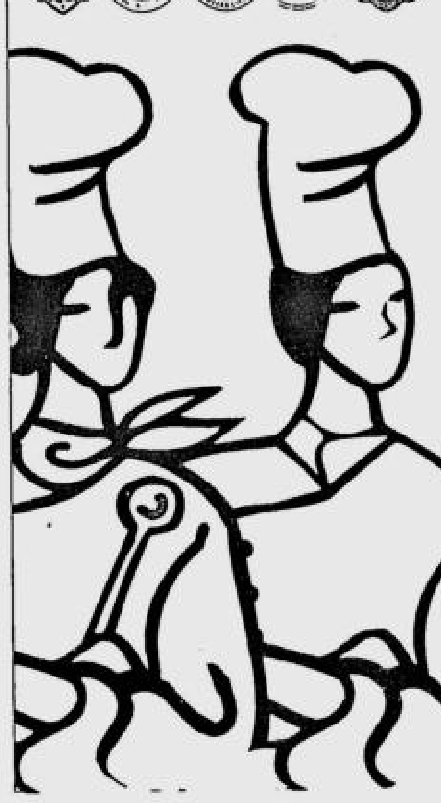

UBF FOODSOLUTIONS DREAM TEAM CHALLENGE COMPETITION

National Champion: Lyceum of Batangas
Students: Ronald Dimaano, Leoncio Barlan, Audrey Dinglasan
Adviser: Rhea Bicol

2nd Place: St. Scholastica's College
Students: Marian Masangque, Ryalin Redondo, Zara Grace Marquez
Adviser: Noemi Cancio

3rd Place: St. Therese - MTC Colleges (Iloilo)
Students: Rey P. Dionson, Sharon A. Bantay, Jennifer A. Roxas
Adviser: Ruby De La Mar

4th Place: Phil. Women's College of Davao
Students: Norel Fariolan, Methusela Bedrejo, Jhoana Marie Tan
Adviser: Julieta Maniego

Special Award from Caltex Philippines:
Caltex Sulit sa Gamit Award
Lyceum of Batangas: Ronald Dimaano, Leoncio Barlan, Audrey Dinglasan.
Adviser: Rhea Bicol

Special Award from NMI Foodservice Equipment Inc.:
The NMI Creative Culinary Presentation Award
Lyceum of Batangas: Ronald Dimaano, Leoncio Barlan, Audrey Dinglasan
Adviser: Rhea Bicol

Special Award from F&B World Magazine:
The F&B World Magazine Foodservice Excellence Award
Lyceum of Batangas: Ronald Dimaano, Leoncio Barlan, Audrey Dinglasan.
Adviser: Rhea Bicol

KNORR NEW ASIA CUISINE COMPETITION

National Champion: University of Regina Carmeli
*Student: Ivy Jacaban * Adviser: Edilberto Tawagon*

2nd Place: University of Mindanao
*Student: Jaaziel Cordero * Adviser: Gina Catedrilla*

3rd Place: Southeast Asian College
*Student: Rischil Mulles * Adviser: Marc Galvez*

4th Place: University of San Jose - Recoletos
*Student: Glenn Santiago * Adviser: Steve Sasam*

Special Award from Vollrath-KLG International:
The Vollrath-KLG Creative Asian Fusion Award
School: University of Regina Carmeli
*Student: Ivy Jacaban * Adviser: Edilberto Tawagon*

Special Prize from
The International School for the Culinary Arts and Hotel Management (ISCAHM)
One month summer course at ISCAHM
*School: University of Regina Carmeli * Student: Ivy Jacaban*

LIPTON MOCKTAIL MIXING COMPETITION

National Champion: De La Salle Lipa
*Student: Aivy Punzalan * Adviser: Jocelyn Salisi*

2nd Place: Lyceum of the Philippines
*Student: Rex Bong Rodriguez * Adviser: Lorenzo Rojo*

3rd Place: Colegio del Sagrado Corazon de Jesus
*Student: Jun Hope Sornito * Adviser: Noli Lallen*

4th Place: Lourdes College of Cagayan de Oro
*Student: Samuel Bonles * Adviser: Raquel Dael*

Special Award from Caltex Philippines:
The Caltex Precision Safety Bartending Award
School: Lycoum of the Philippines
*Student: Rex Bong Rodriguez * Adviser Lorenzo Rojo*

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Olé for Mexican cuisine

From page D1

SILVIA Inuoe

portions, then blended before baking. It is a family recipe, and Sylvia doesn't want to tamper with family traditions.

Come April, Silvia will be moving back to Japan permanently. Her only child, daughter Natsuko (meaning "summer girl"), who was born in the Philippines, will be her best memory of the Philippines, she says.

Frijoles

1 c black beans, soaked overnight
1 ½ to 2 liters water
1 onion
2 cloves garlic
1 avocado leaf or coriander
3 cloves garlic, chopped
½ tomato, chopped
½ onion, chopped
coriander, chopped
vegetable oil

Rinse soaked beans and boil in 1½ liters of water with the onions, garlic and avocado leaf or coriander. Cook for two hours or until tender.

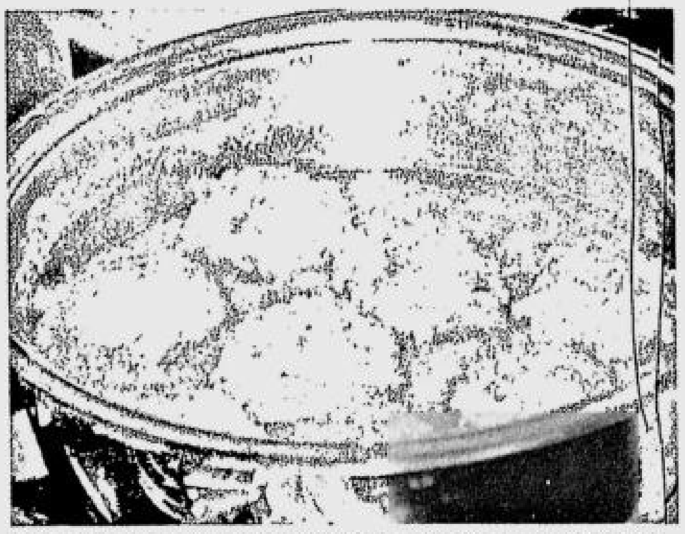
Puree the beans in a blender. Heat the oil in cooking pan and saute the garlic, onion, tomatoes and coriander. Add the pureed beans and saute. Season to taste.

Albondigas

150 g ground pork
150 g ground beef
1 onion, chopped
1 tomato, chopped
1 egg
salt and pepper to taste
cumin seed or 1 tsp cumin powder
1 egg, hardboiled, chopped
3 tomatoes, blanched, peeled, pureed with cumin

Mix the ground meats well with the chopped tomatoes, chopped onion, egg, salt and pepper and cumin. Shape into balls of desired size, flatten and stuff with chopped hardboiled egg and roll into balls again.

Heat oil in cooking pan, saute the tomato sauce and add 1 chicken broth cube. When the sauce boils, add the meatballs and simmer till well cooked.



MEXICAN Albondigas has a surprise in the center—chopped hard boiled eggs. The meatballs, a combination of ground beef and pork, have tomatoes and onion in the mixture and are swimming in tomato sauce.

Pastel de Elote

6 cobs of yellow corn, kernels scraped
5 eggs
100 g butter, melted
1 can condensed milk
1 tbsp baking powder

Divide the corn kernels into two portions.

To one portion, add the eggs and melted butter. Process in blender. Do not overprocess. Pour mixture into big bowl.

To the second portion, add the condensed milk and the baking powder. Process in blender.

Combine and blend well the two mixtures. Pour into a greased and floured 13" x 9 pan, preferably from where it can be served. Bake at 350°F for 35 minutes. Or bake in muffin pans lined with paper lining for a shorter time.

Cooking classes in March

FOLLOWING is the schedule of Reggie Apiras' cooking classes for the rest of the month:

March 19—Indonesian 101: Gado-gado, the art of making authentic Satays: Lilit (Minced Seafood), Sampi (Beef), Udang (Prawn), Ayin (Chicken), Babi (Pork), Lilit (Duck), Madra (Lamb) with Authentic Peanut Sauce, Nsi Goreng, Dadar (Indonesian Pancake)

March 20—The Ultimate Coffee Class (for wannabe baristas, coffee shop owners or serious coffee aficionados): Brief History, Coffee Bean Guide, Coffee Terms, Brewing the Perfect Cup, Hot and Cold Coffee Concoctions (from Espresso, Cappuccino, Latte, Frappuccino, Au Lait, Flavored Coffees etc., over 15 different recipes). Plus 6 coffee cake, cookie, scones and bars recipes to complement the perfect brew. With complete hand-outs. Coffee machines by Saeco. Hands on. Special class, P2,500+ ingredients.

March 22—A meal in a plate (soup, salad and panini combinations): Pomodoro and Basil Soup, Italian Marinated Seafood Salad, Grilled Vegetable Panini, Bouillabaise, Salad Nicoise, Croque Panini, Twisted Hot and Sour Soup, Crunchy Spring Roll Salad, Peking Duck Panini, Middle Eastern Vegetable Soup, Turkish Couscous Salad, Shawarma of Angus Beef Panini with Vegetables in Tahin and Spinach Yogurt Dressings

March 24 (Wednesday)—Asian Kaanin 101 (Rice Cakes of Asia): My Pandan and Ube Suman with Mango, Chocolate and Custard Sauces; Sticky Rice Cake in Brown Sugar Sauce, Sweet Sago Cakes, Sago Balls with Meat Filling, Tako (Thai Water Chestnut or Corn Pudding with Coconut Custard Topping, Thai-style Sapin-Sapin or Khanom Chan, Indonesian-style Suman with Chicken, Asian Fusion Style Guinataan

March 26—Salad Making 101: Learn the tricks to salad making, cleaning, washing, chopping, slicing. Prepare the perfect buffet with mixed greens, fruits, and with seafood, steak and chicken grilled on the spot plus condiments. From light to main course salads. Over 15 dressings done right—Caesar, Ranch, Honey Mustard, etc.

Call 9289296, 9273008, 633162, 6474744 or 0917-8399888.

Teaching tiny cooks

ENROLLMENT is ongoing for Vky Veloso-Barrera Tiny Kitchen children's cooking classes this school break.

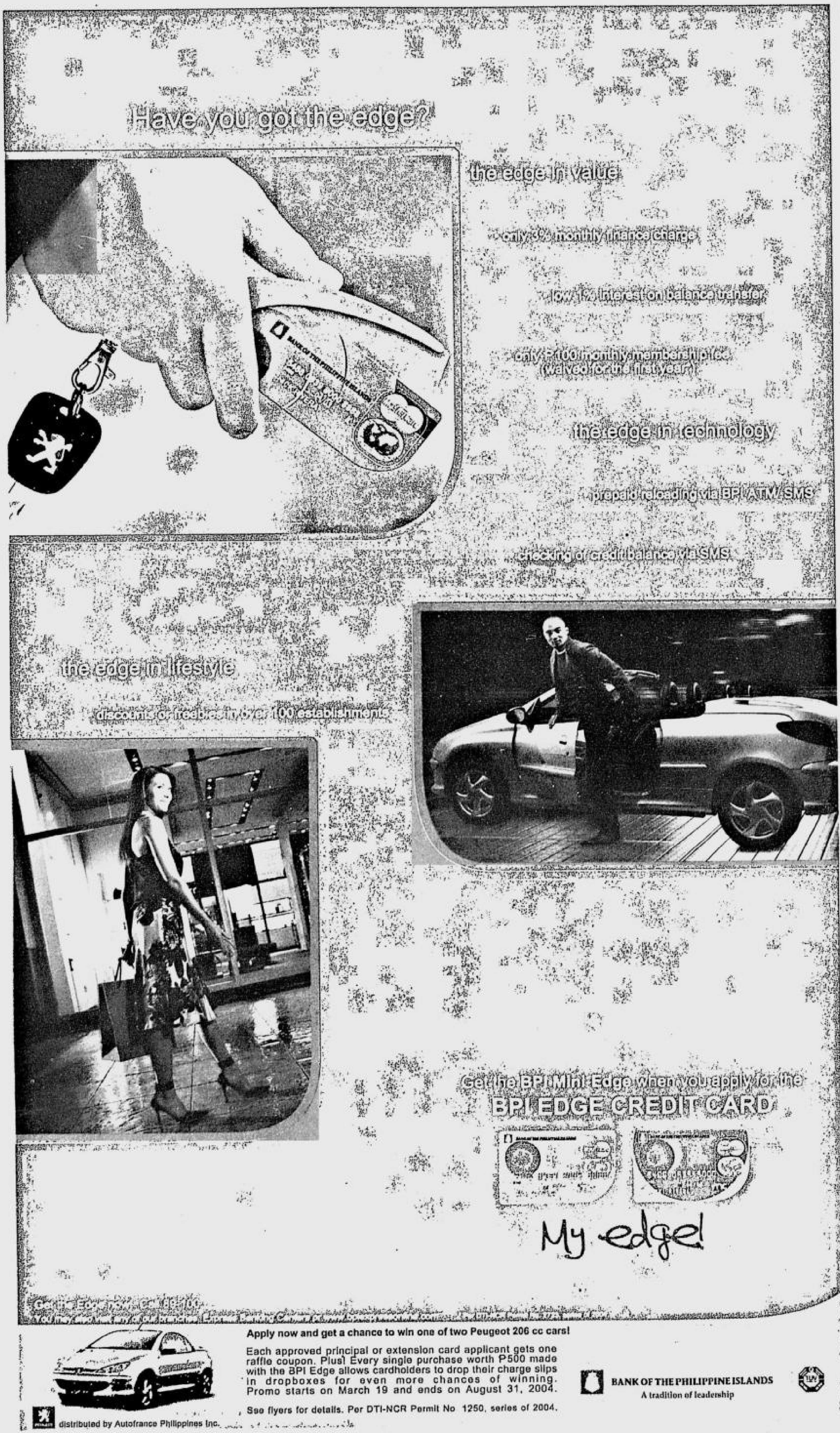
Classes in this year's Tiny Kitchen 2 are for kids seven and up. A full menu is taught in each class, including main dish, side dish, drink and dessert. The kid-tested recipes are all safe, easy and fun to do. They were especially developed for kids by Barrera.

Students can choose to attend classes on Tuesday, Thursday or Saturday for five consecutive weeks beginning March 29 until May 3. The second set of classes begins May 10 and ends June 7. Classes are held 9-11 a.m.

Each five-session course costs P4,50, inclusive of ingredients. Children take home what they cook. Only seven children will be accepted in each class.

Now on its sixth year, some 250 children have enrolled in the Tiny Kitchen classes.

Call 4102279 or 09165165035.



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See flyers for details. Per DTI-NCR Permit No 1250, series of 2004.

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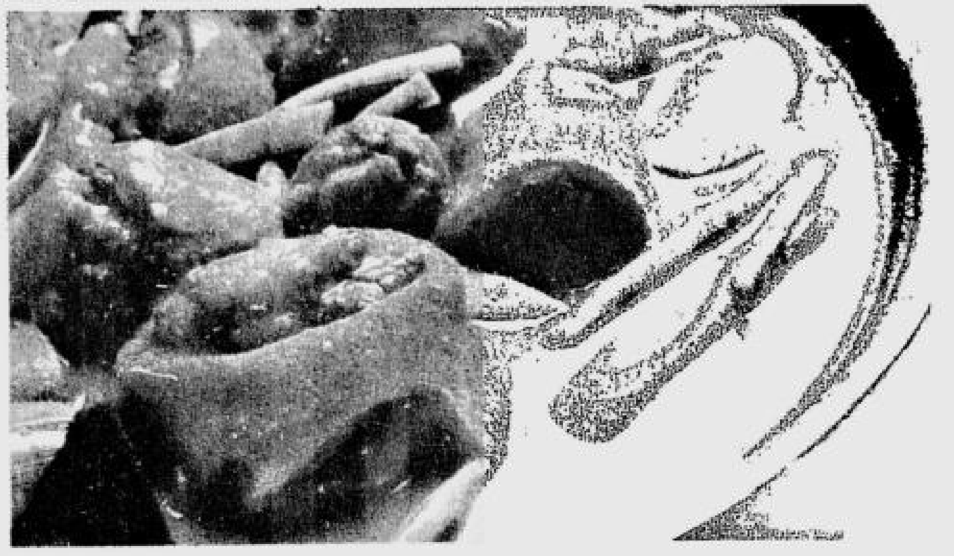

KARE-KARE

March is for graduates

GRADUATES can celebrate an important milestone with family and friends in the country's premier Filipino buffet restaurant and get big servings and even bigger savings.

This month, Cabalen offers the 8+1 Graduate Buffet. Groups of nine (with at least one graduating student) will automatically get a P249 discount or the equivalent of one buffet meal.

A group of six buffet diners will get a free bucket of oysters.

Cabalen's buffet spread has over 50 Filipino favorites including Kare-Kare, Kalderetang Dila, Sizzling Sisig, Lechon de Leche, Tinapa Rice, Bulalo with Mais, Rellenong Bangus, Beringhe (Arroz Valencia). For dessert, aside from native *kakanin* and fresh fruits, diners can mix their own Halo-Halo with nine specially made ingredients.

Graduates should simply present a valid school ID to avail of the discount in any of Cabalen's 10 branches.

Cabalen is at West Avenue, Quezon City; Katipunan Avenue, Quezon City; SM Megamall, Edsa, Mandaluyong; SM City Manila; SM City North Edsa; Glorietta 3, Makati; Robinson's Place Ermita; Robinson's Starmills Pampanga; Brick Road Area, Sta. Lucia East Grand Mall, Cainta; and Harrison Plaza Village Square, Manila. Visit www.Cabalen.com.ph

FREE bucket of oysters for every group of six

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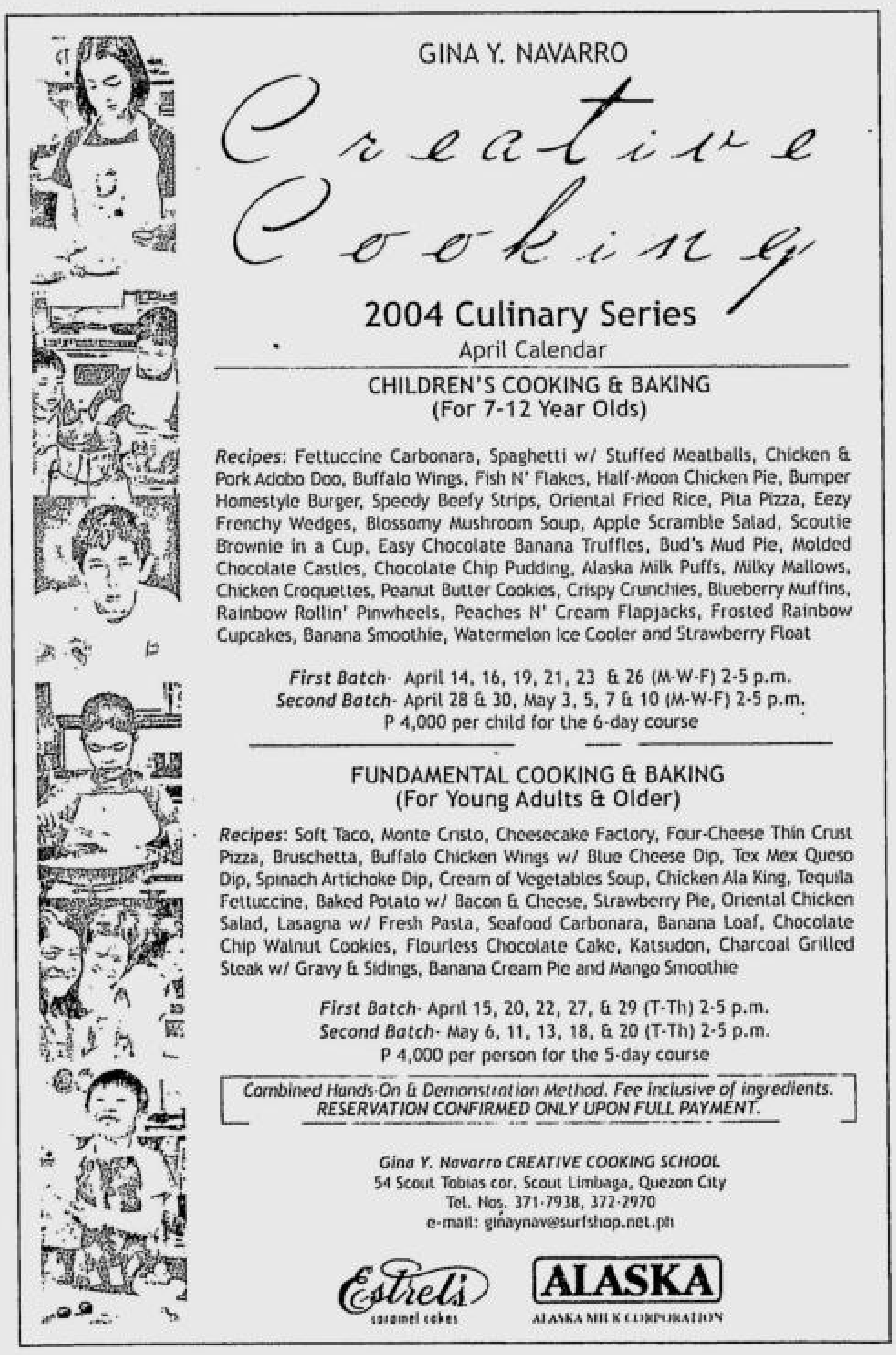
DIANA ZUBIRI

It's showtime at Robinsons Place Manila. Be enticed as Diana performs for you live in an unforgettable mall show! This promises to be an afternoon of excitement, so don't you dare miss it!

March 19 (Friday) 4pm
Orosa Atrium
Robinsons Place Manila

ROBINSONS Place MANILA



GINA Y. NAVARRO

Creative Cooking

2004 Culinary Series
April Calendar

CHILDREN'S COOKING & BAKING
(For 7-12 Year Olds)

Recipes: Fettuccine Carbonara, Spaghetti w/ Stuffed Meatballs, Chicken & Pork Adobo Doo, Buffalo Wings, Fish N' Flakes, Half-Moon Chicken Pie, Bumper Homestyle Burger, Speedy Beefy Strips, Oriental Fried Rice, Pita Pizza, Eezy Frenchy Wedges, Blossomy Mushroom Soup, Apple Scramble Salad, Scoutie Brownie in a Cup, Easy Chocolate Banana Truffles, Bud's Mud Pie, Molded Chocolate Castles, Chocolate Chip Pudding, Alaska Milk Puffs, Milky Mallows, Chicken Croquettes, Peanut Butter Cookies, Crispy Crunchies, Blueberry Muffins, Rainbow Rollin' Pinwheels, Peaches N' Cream Flapjacks, Frosted Rainbow Cupcakes, Banana Smoothie, Watermelon Ice Cooler and Strawberry Float

First Batch- April 14, 16, 19, 21, 23 & 26 (M-W-F) 2-5 p.m.
Second Batch- April 28 & 30, May 3, 5, 7 & 10 (M-W-F) 2-5 p.m.
P 4,000 per child for the 6-day course

FUNDAMENTAL COOKING & BAKING
(For Young Adults & Older)

Recipes: Soft Taco, Monte Cristo, Cheesecake Factory, Four-Cheese Thin Crust Pizza, Bruschetta, Buffalo Chicken Wings w/ Blue Cheese Dip, Tex Mex Queso Dip, Spinach Artichoke Dip, Cream of Vegetables Soup, Chicken Ala King, Tequila Fettuccine, Baked Potato w/ Bacon & Cheese, Strawberry Pie, Oriental Chicken Salad, Lasagna w/ Fresh Pasta, Seafood Carbonara, Banana Loaf, Chocolate Chip Walnut Cookies, Flourless Chocolate Cake, Katsudon, Charcoal Grilled Steak w/ Gravy & Sidings, Banana Cream Pie and Mango Smoothie

First Batch- April 15, 20, 22, 27, & 29 (T-Th) 2-5 p.m.
Second Batch- May 6, 11, 13, 18, & 20 (T-Th) 2-5 p.m.
P 4,000 per person for the 5-day course

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You can also pile up the Miles in other establishments.

Promo period is from 24 February 2004 to 31 January 2005. See flyers for more details.
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0403. Series of 2004.

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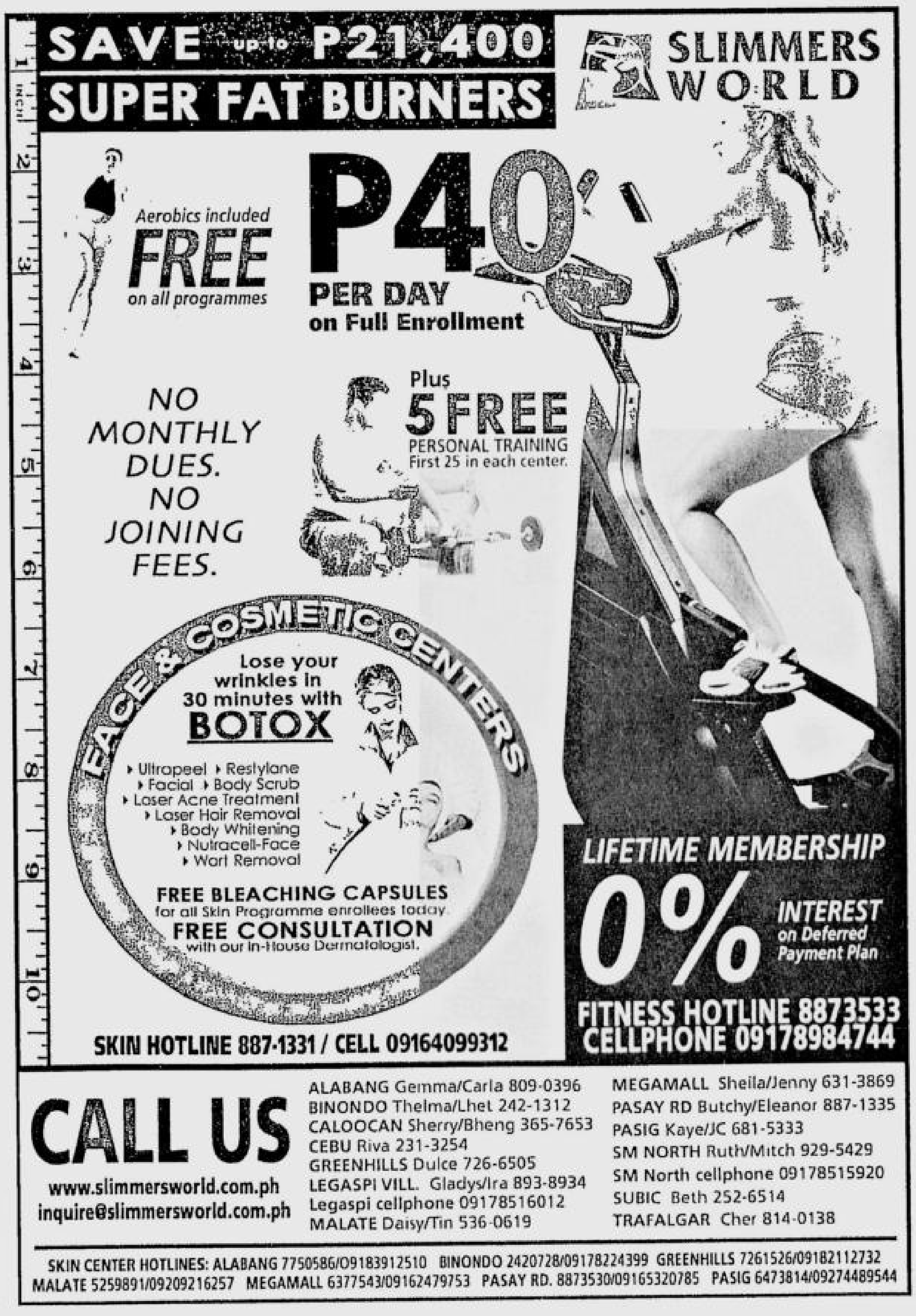

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SM North cellphone 09178515920
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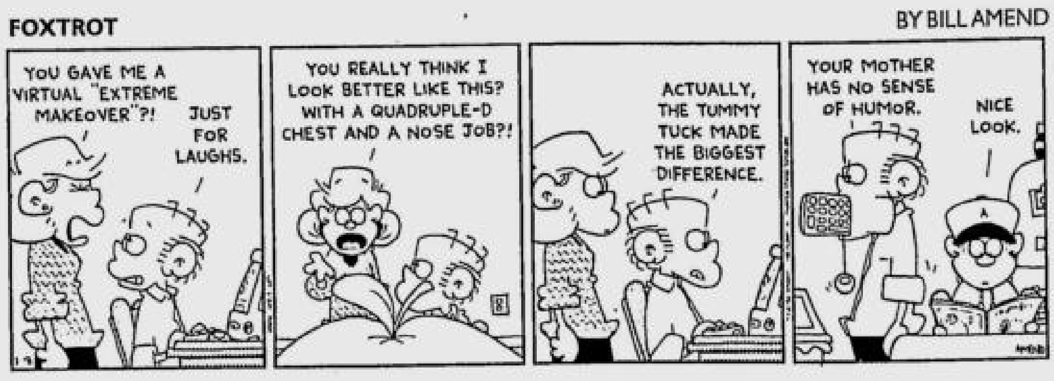
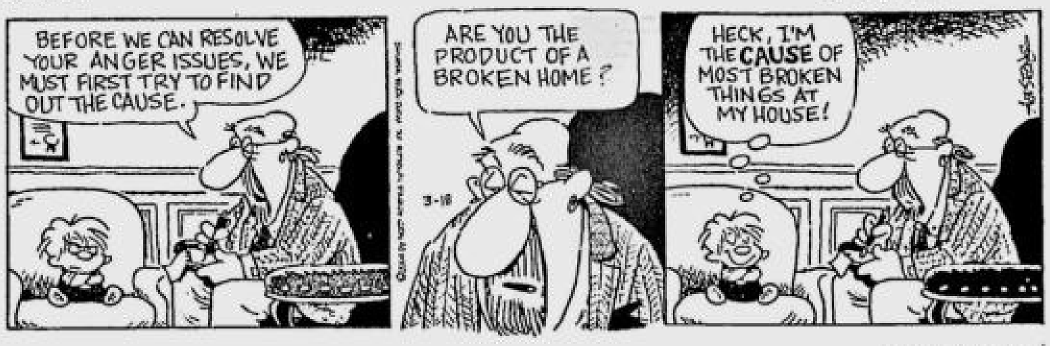
TRAFALGAR Cher 814-0138

SKIN CENTER HOTLINES: ALABANG 7750586/09183912510 BINONDO 2420728/09178224399 GREENHILLS 7261526/09182112732 MALATE 5259891/09209216257 MEGAMALL 6377543/09162479753 PASAY RD. 8873530/09165320785 PASIG 6473814/09274489544

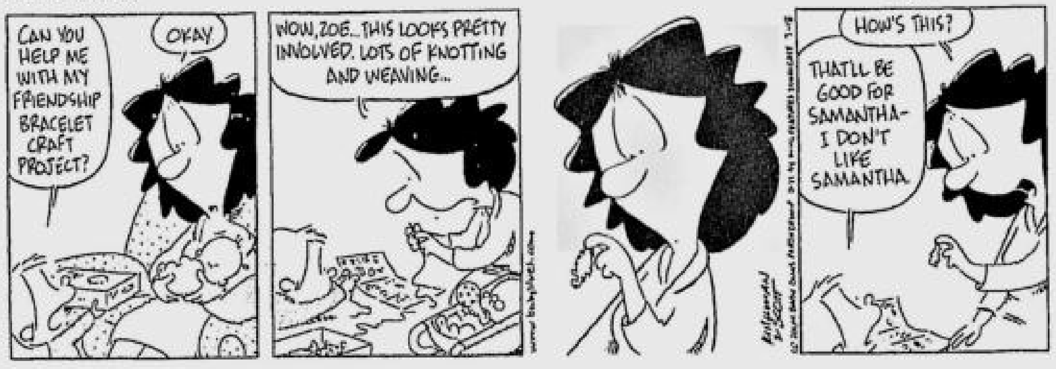
FOXTROT
BY BILL AMEND


YOU GAVE ME A VIRTUAL "EXTREME MAKEOVER"?!
JUST FOR LAUGHS.
YOU REALLY THINK I LOOK BETTER LIKE THIS? WITH A QUADRUPLE-D CHEST AND A NOSE JOB?!
ACTUALLY, THE TUMMY TUCK MADE THE BIGGEST DIFFERENCE.
YOUR MOTHER HAS NO SENSE OF HUMOR.
NICE LOOK.

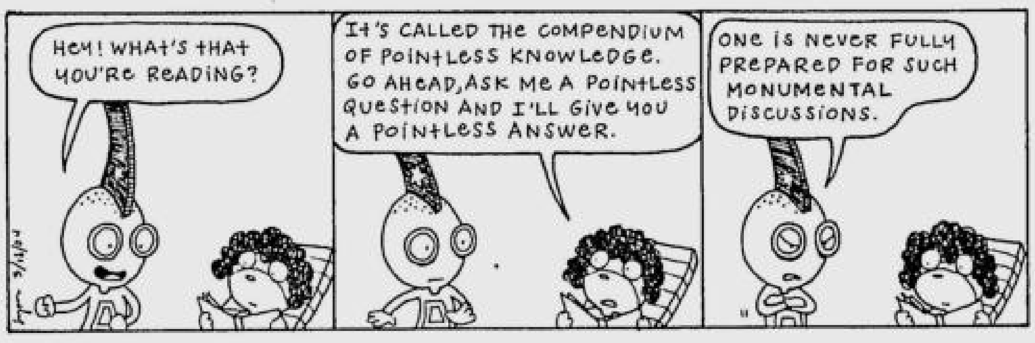
MARVIN
BY TOM ARMSTRONG


BEFORE WE CAN RESOLVE YOUR ANGER ISSUES, WE MUST FIRST TRY TO FIND OUT THE CAUSE.
ARE YOU THE PRODUCT OF A BROKEN HOME?
3-18
HECK, I'M THE CAUSE OF MOST BROKEN THINGS AT MY HOUSE!

BABY BLUES
BY JERRY SCOTT


CAN YOU HELP ME WITH MY FRIENDSHIP BRACELET CRAFT PROJECT?
OKAY.
WOW, ZOE... THIS LOOKS PRETTY INVOLVED. LOTS OF KNOTTING AND WEAVING...
HOW'S THIS?
THAT'LL BE GOOD FOR SAMANTHA- I DON'T LIKE SAMANTHA.

ATOMO AND WEBOY
BY LYRA GARCELLANO


HEY! WHAT'S THAT YOU'RE READING?
IT'S CALLED THE COMPENDIUM OF POINTLESS KNOWLEDGE. GO AHEAD, ASK ME A POINTLESS QUESTION AND I'LL GIVE YOU A POINTLESS ANSWER.
ONE IS NEVER FULLY PREPARED FOR SUCH MONUMENTAL DISCUSSIONS.

HOROSCOPE
BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're smooth, powerful and always diplomatic. Because of this, others are drawn to you. You're a magnet. Because you're patient, you choose your moments. You have a sense of what you want and when you can get it. Now it is time to let things go and to move on to create room for new things to enter your world.

Birthdate of: Queen Latifah, singer/actress; John Updike, writer; Vanessa Williams, singer/actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You might be tempted to go overboard buying beautiful, romantic (but impractical) things today. They're lovely, irresistible items, but do you need them?

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Think twice before you act on important conversations with bosses or a parent today. Confusion is definitely possible. Wishful thinking can cause you to misinterpret things.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): It's easy to slip away into moments of fantasy today. We all do this. But it's important to remember that it is just daydreaming. It's not real.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): If you're disappointed by a friend today, ask yourself if you were expecting too much. Unrealistic or unexpressed expectations are a sure setup for disappointment.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You like to think the best of your friends. That's just who you are. Try not to be disappointed if someone doesn't live up to your expectations today.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Avoid political, religious and philosophical arguments with others today. Somehow you might be a victim of pie-in-the-sky thinking. (Not grounded.)

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Love at first sight is possible today. This is the kind of day when relationships can begin and end. Unfortunately, both might be based on fuzzy thinking.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Don't expect a loved one to live up to an unattainable, romantic ideal. Your partner is simply a frail human being just like you. Your relationship is in the real world (not a movie).

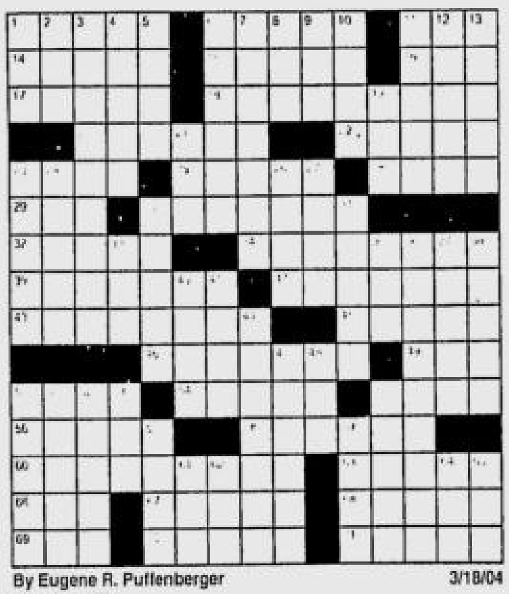
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): If you can help co-workers today, help them. However, maybe you can't. All you ever can do is your best. It's that simple.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You want romance today! You want soft lights, candles, music, sweet reverie and someone hanging on your every word. Perhaps you can try for a close imitation of this.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): If you work to make your home more pleasant and harmonious today, it will make you happy. You need a refuge where you can feel safe from the trials and tribulations of the world.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Your imagination is in overdrive today! Expect to do a lot of daydreaming. It's an excellent day for creative writing and the arts. It's also a great day for photography and film work.

DAILY CROSSWORD

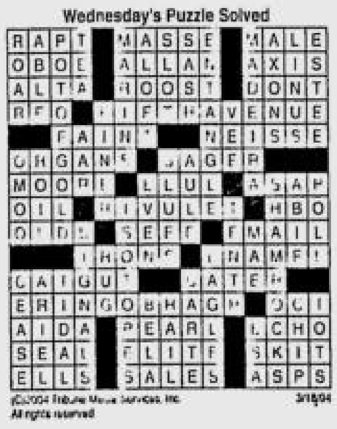


By Eugene R. Puffenberger
Houston, TX
3/18/04

ACROSS
1 Twangy
6 Dips in the landscape
11 Pugilists' grp.
14 Dried fruit
15 French farewell
16 Possesses
17 Aired again
18 Crab
20 Intercede
22 __ eleison (Lord, have mercy)
23 Tan and Irving
25 More uncommon
28 Ailments
29 French possessive pronoun
30 Type of overcoat
32 Coagulates
34 Daybreaks
39 Side by side
42 Dancer Duncan
43 Kneecaps
45 Grieve
46 Marceau and Duchamp
49 Checkers side
50 Stow cargo
54 Slightly daffy
55 Small amounts
56 Botanical swelling
58 Snow-covered peak
60 Crab
63 Brightest star designation
66 Velvet end?
67 Distinct stage
68 Wise lawgiver
69 Rent-sign abbr.
70 Stitched up
71 Delivered a low blow?

DOWN
1 "All Things Considered" stn.
2 Metric square measure
3 Crab
4 Diarist Nin
5 Horne or Olin
6 Feudal tenant
7 Sticks
8 Commit perjury
9 Marine shocker
10 Act peeved
11 Spin around
12 Sweet herb
13 Hearth debris
19 Memo acronym
21 "Rosemary's Baby" writer Levin
23 Songwriters' org.
24 Thin toast
26 Pin box
27 Moody and Wood
30 Hymn of praise
31 Mine cars
33 Driving area
35 Bridal vow
36 Crab
37 Went wrong
38 "__ of Iwo Jima"
40 Weighty block
41 Scarlett's place
44 Overshadow
47 Acted as toastmaster
48 Caustic solution
50 French painter Fernand
51 To the point, Lat.
52 James and Dizzy
53 German river
55 Claw
57 Poisonous snakes
59 Wine container
61 Common article
62 Nautical swerve
64 Soil turner
65 Plus

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved



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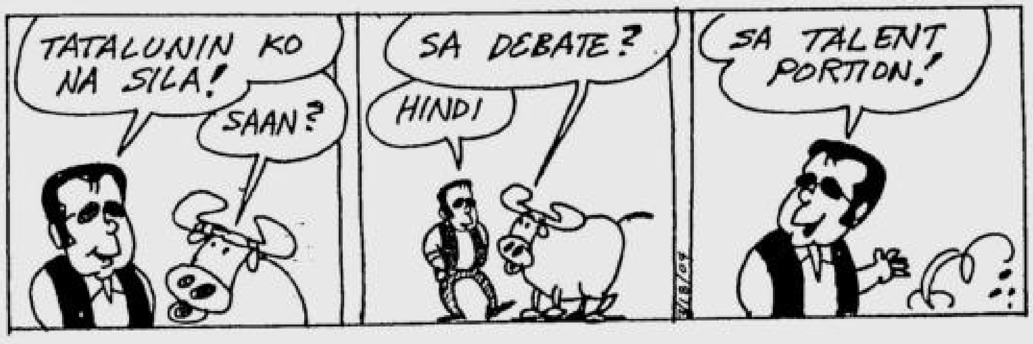
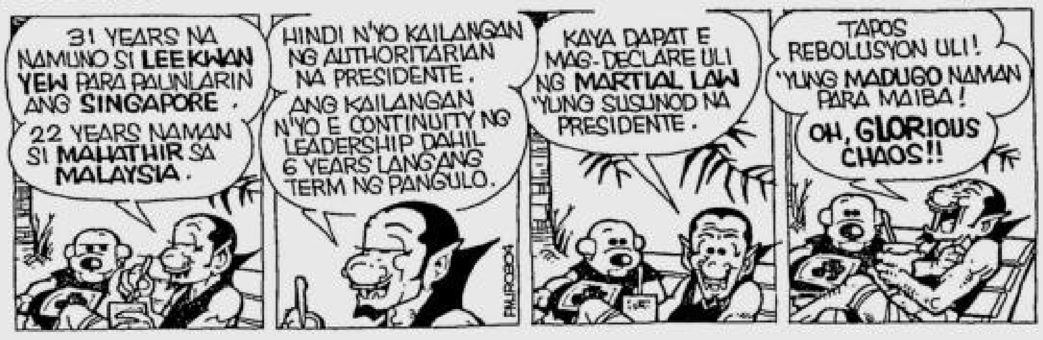
3/18/04

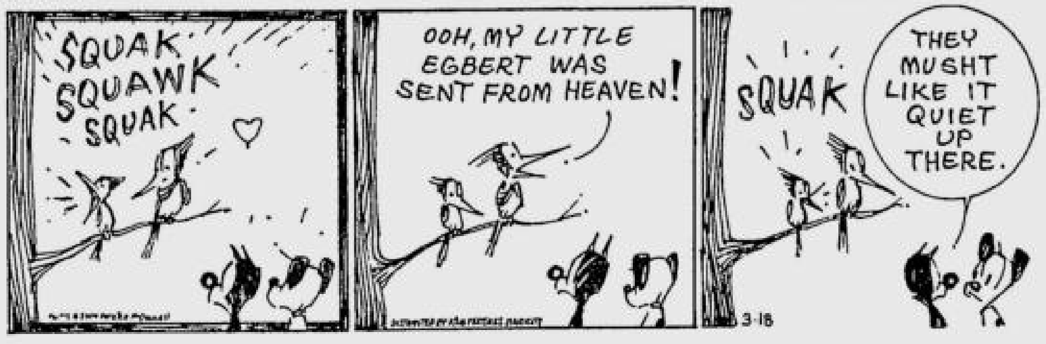
A. LIPIN
BY JESS ABRERA


TATALUNIN KO NA SILA!
SAAN?
SA DEBATE?
HINDI
SA TALENT PORTION!

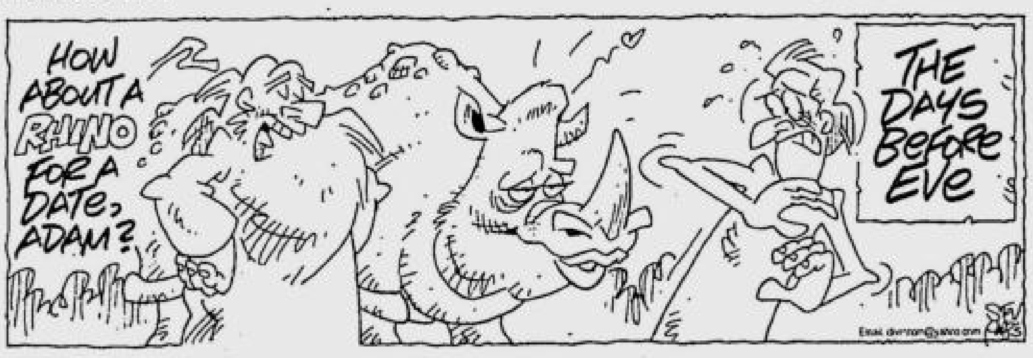
PUGAD BABOY
BY P.M. JUNIOR


31 YEARS NA NAMUNO SI LEE KWAN YEW PARA PAUNLARIN ANG SINGAPORE.
22 YEARS NAMAN SI MAHATHIR SA MALAYSIA.
HINDI N'YO KAILANGAN NG AUTHORITARIAN NA PRESIDENTE. ANG KAILANGAN N'YO E CONTINUITY NG LEADERSHIP DAHIL 6 YEARS LANG ANG TERM NG PANGULO.
KAYA DAPAT E MAG-DECLARE ULI NG MARTIAL LAW 'YUNG SUSUNOD NA PRESIDENTE.
TAPOS REBOLUSYON ULI! 'YUNG MADUGO NAMAN PARA MAIBA!
OH, GLORIOUS CHAOS!!

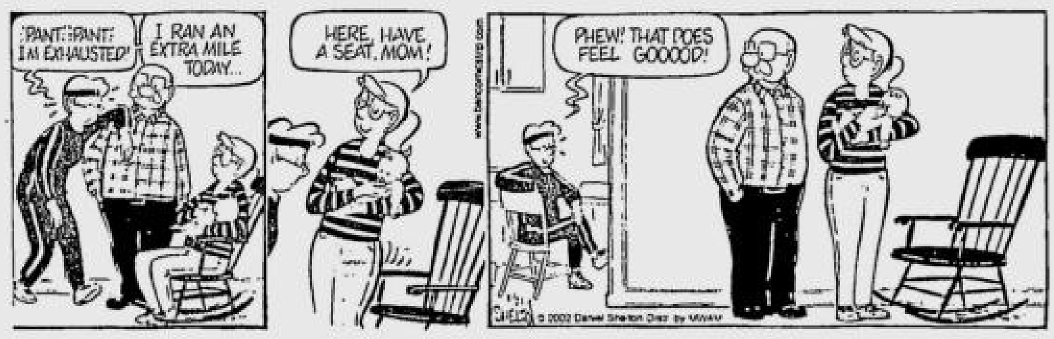
MUTTS
BY PATRICK McDONNELL


SQUAK SQUAWK SQUAK
OOH, MY LITTLE EGBERT WAS SENT FROM HEAVEN!
SQUAK
THEY MUSHT LIKE IT QUIET UP THERE.
3-18

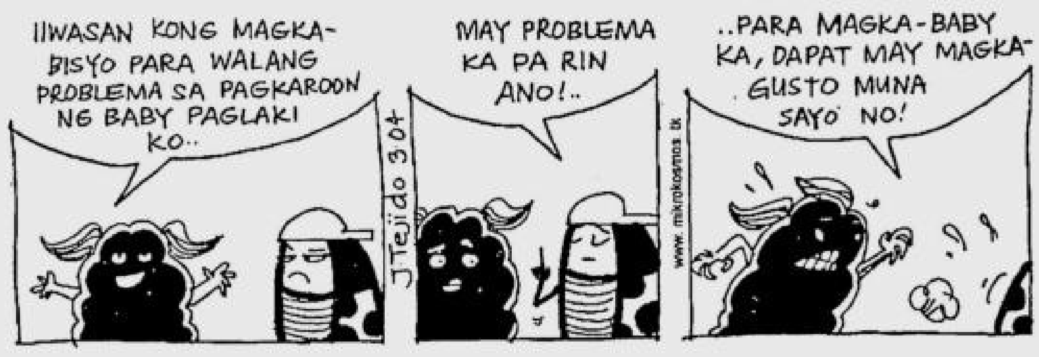
DIVINE COMEDY
BY STEVEN PABALINAS


HOW ABOUT A RHINO FOR A DATE, ADAM?
THE DAYS BEFORE EVE

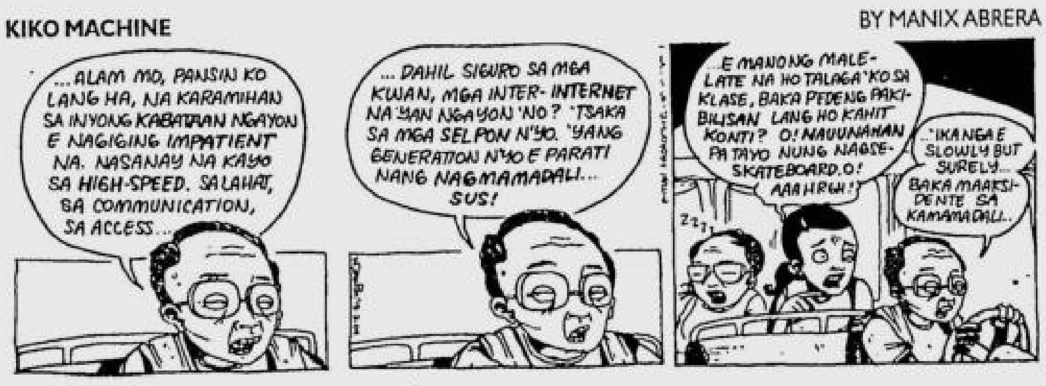
BEN
BY DANIEL SHELTON


:PANT::PANT: I'M EXHAUSTED!
I RAN AN EXTRA MILE TODAY...
HERE, HAVE A SEAT, MOM!
PHEW! THAT DOES FEEL GOOOOD!

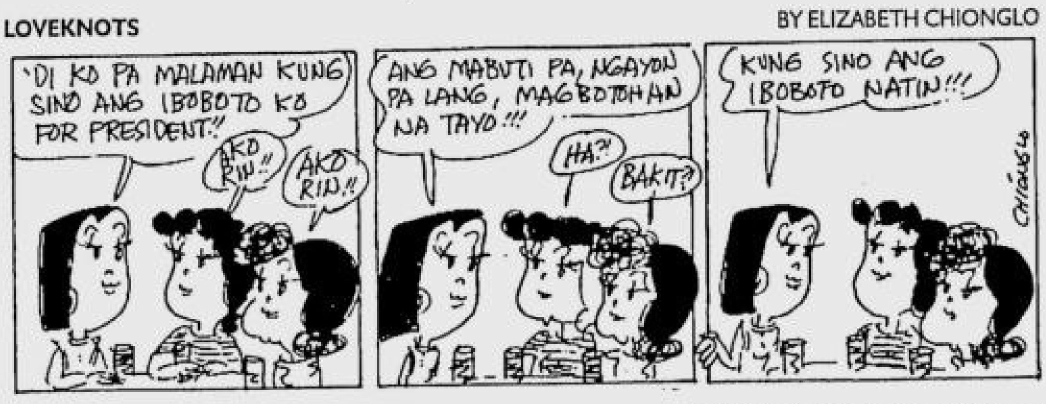
MIKROKOSMOS
BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


IIWASAN KONG MAGKA-BISYO PARA WALANG PROBLEMA SA PAGKAROON NG BABY PAGLAKI KO..
MAY PROBLEMA KA PA RIN ANO!..
J Tejido 3 04
www.mikrokosmos.tk
..PARA MAGKA-BABY KA, DAPAT MAY MAGKA-GUSTO MUNA SAYO NO!

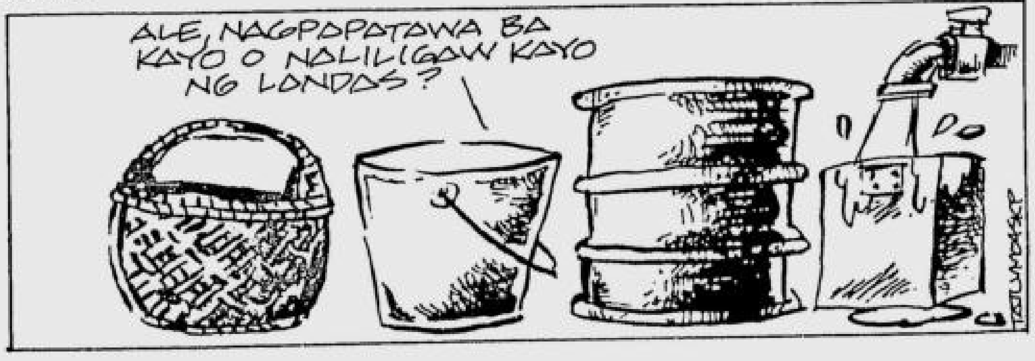
KIKO MACHINE
BY MANIX ABRERA


...ALAM MO, PANSIN KO LANG HA, NA KARAMIHAN SA INYONG KABATAAN NGAYON E NAGIGING IMPATIENT NA. NASANAY NA KAYO SA HIGH-SPEED. SA LAHAT, SA COMMUNICATION, SA ACCESS...
...DAHIL SIGURO SA MGA KWAN, MGA INTER- INTERNET NA 'YAN NGAYON 'NO? 'TSAKA SA MGA SELPON N'YO. 'YANG GENERATION N'YO E PARATI NANG NAGMAMADALI... SUS!
E MANONG MALE-LATE NA HO TALAGA 'KO SA KLASE, BAKA PEDENG PAKI-BILISAN LANG HO KAHIT KONTI? O! NAUUNAHAN PA TAYO NUNG NAGSE-SKATEBOARD.O! AAAHRGH!
'IKANGA E SLOWLY BUT SURELY... BAKA MAAKSI-DENTE SA KAMAMADALI..
zzz

LOVEKNOTS
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


'DI KO PA MALAMAN KUNG SINO ANG IBOBOTO KO FOR PRESIDENT!
AKO RIN!!
AKO RIN!!
ANG MABUTI PA, NGAYON PA LANG, MAGBOTOHAN NA TAYO!!!
HA?!
BAKIT?
KUNG SINO ANG IBOBOTO NATIN!!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK
BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


ALE, NAGPAPATAWA BA KAYO O NALILIGAW KAYO NG LONDAS?

Is anybody making sure pet food is safe?

THE CONSUMER
Marietta Velasco Giron

IF OUR pets could only speak, they would probably protest against the food they're getting.

As we said in a previous column, there's a need to regulate the sale and distribution of pet foods to make sure they meet health and safety standards.

For example, sale of expired and badly stored food is a problem, and so is insufficient information given in product labels. There's also a need to look into the ready-mixed pet foods made of scrap meat from wet markets.

Needless to say, pets, like humans, can suffer dietary problems by eating the wrong kind of food.

The recent recall of a dog food product by its manufacturer is a step in the right direction, setting a good example for others in the local pet food industry. Here's the gist of the announcement of the product recall:

"Concerned about an increase in renal illness among dogs, Master Foods Philippines Inc. announced a voluntary and temporary withdrawal of its PedigreeO Dry dog food from the Philippine market. The company has done exhaustive testing of the dog food, and so far, the cause of the increase in renal illness has not been determined, and no harmful ingredient has been found.

"According to Dr. Duncan Hall, the company's regional scientific affairs manager, the company experts are now working closely with pet owners, as well as with local veterinarians, government agencies, and international veterinary experts, to determine the cause of the illness."

Pet owners were assured of the quality and safety of other PedigreeO products. For more information, write to consumer@pedigree.com.ph or call the company customer care service at 8886060.

> The recent recall of a dog food product by its manufacturer is a step in the right direction

Banned products

The Animal Feeds Standard Division of the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) urges consumers to report sale or use of banned veterinary drugs. Most of the drugs listed here were banned a long time ago, but were reportedly still used as additives to feeds, even in aquaculture, to make animals disease-resistant, grow faster but leaner.

Nitrofurazone and Furazolidone, anti-bacterial compounds, have been banned in the Philippines since August 2000 for use in animals raised for meat production. The United States Food and Drug Administration has banned these drugs since 1991 for being, among others, cancer-causing.

There are reports that the compounds are still being sold and used as anti-bacterial treatment, as well as additives to pre-mixed animal feed.

Olaquindox and Carbadox were banned in January 2000, prohibited for use in animals raised for their meat, and in aquaculture. They are not only toxic to animals; they also pose health risks to farm workers handling them.

Chloramphenicol, the prescription drug for infections in humans, has been banned since April 1990 for use in livestock and in aquaculture application. Residues in meat can pose health risks to sensitive consumers.

Beta-Agonist Drugs, used in humans as broncho-dilators and a contraction-relaxant during delivery, are used in animals to reduce fat and speed up growth. The drugs include elenbuterol, salbutamol, terbutalin and pirbuterol.

The compounds are common active ingredients in anti-asthma preparations but the safety profile of these compounds has not been determined to date. According to a brief description of the drugs attached to a Department of Agriculture circular, they may pose adverse health risks to human lungs and heart functions, and may lead to occupational-related disease and death.

Agriculture Secretary Luis Lorenzo Jr. issued the ban on the use of Beta-Agonist Drugs in animals on May 12, 2003. In spite of this, recent screening of pigs slaughtered in Metro Manila, Bulacan and Pampanga showed residues of salbutamol and clenbuterol.

Report to the Animal Feeds Standards Division (9247954 and 9201764) use of these banned substances. Or write to BAI director Jose Q. Molina, Visayas Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City 1101.

Japanese food chain gets a new Heart

HINOYA
1 Beef Bowl is here

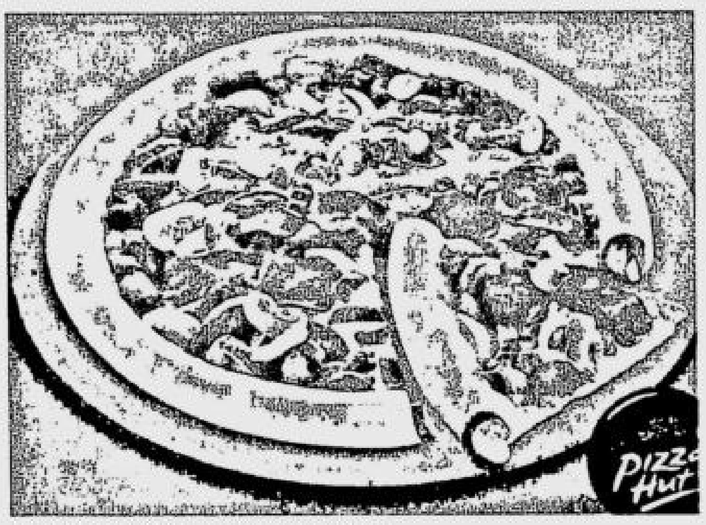
EVANGELISTA with her life-sized poster board

YOSHINOYA, Japan's No. 1 beef bowl restaurant, recently presented its celebrity endorser, Heart Evangelista, in an event dubbed "Yoshinoya Has A Heart!" at the Glorietta Ayala Mall Atrium.

Heart signed autographs, chatted with and had pictorials with fans. Afterwards, a raffle draw was held at Yoshinoya's Park Square 1 branch, with Yoshinoya gift certificates and T-shirts given away. Yoshinoya ballpens and miso soups were also given away free to dine-in customers.

Yoshinoya, with outlets at Park Square 1, SM Southmall, SM Megamall, Robinsons Galleria and, soon, SM City North Edsa, said it chose Heart as endorser because she typified the wholesome character and bright spirit of Filipino youth.

The Japanese food chain is also present in China, Singapore, Taiwan and the United States. Originally famous for its Gyudon (beef bowl), Yoshinoya became an international fast-food staple by providing delicious and fast meals of great quality. This, plus its reasonable pricing, makes Yoshinoya a favorite among Pinoy foodies.



PIZZA Hut's Triple Stuffed Crust Pizza

Triple-treat pizza

PIZZA HUT, the world's number one pizza chain, introduced the very first stuffed crust pizza not so long ago.

What followed were a series of stuffed crust pizzas loaded with different stuffings, from sausage to pepperoni.

Now, Pizza Hut brings together all these favorite ingredients and stuffs them into the all-new and power-packed Triple Stuffed Crust Pizza.

It has creamy mozzarella cheese with meaty sausages wrapped in tangy pepperoni all stuffed in the crust—a triple treat for stuffed pizza lovers! It's like getting three great pizzas for the price of one.

The Triple Stuffed Crust Pizza is available in all your favorite pan pizza flavors in regular and family sizes.

Those who like to share their Stuffed Crust Pizza can avail themselves of special meal bundles.

Enjoy a regular supreme Triple Stuffed Crust Pizza, two Cream of Mushroom Soups, Cinnamon Bread Sticks (four pieces) and two glasses of Mirinda Strawberry for just P299, or savings of P110. For bigger groups, enjoy dine-in, take-out or delivery feast and save as much as P138.

Ideal gifts for coffee buffs

STARBUCKS presents, its Spring Collection, a complete line of must-haves perfect as gifts for young coffee buffs who will graduate this month.

The collection starts off with the 8oz Spring 2004 Tumbler. The acrylic double wall thermoplastic tumbler features an Easter design, no-spill flip lid, nonslip rubber footpad and a glossy polished surface.

Available in 12oz and 16oz are the Spring Floral 2004 International Tumblers, similar to the Spring 2004 Tumbler and with a curved shape designed to fit most car cup kidders.

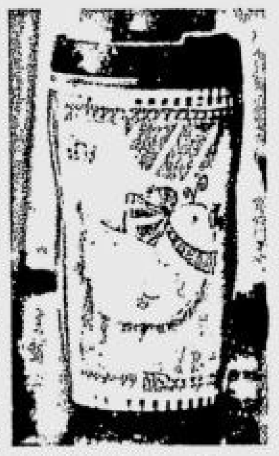
The 12oz and 16oz Groovy Lucy Tumblers come in two hot new colors: pink and key lime. Slim, fashionable and totally functional, these instated double wall tumblers are great for hot or cold drinks on-the-go. The sealing lids prevent spills, and the comfort handles make them easy to hold.

This season's Bearista Easter Bunny and Bearista Easter Bunny Magnet in pink and white are the 26th designs in the Bearista Bear Collection.

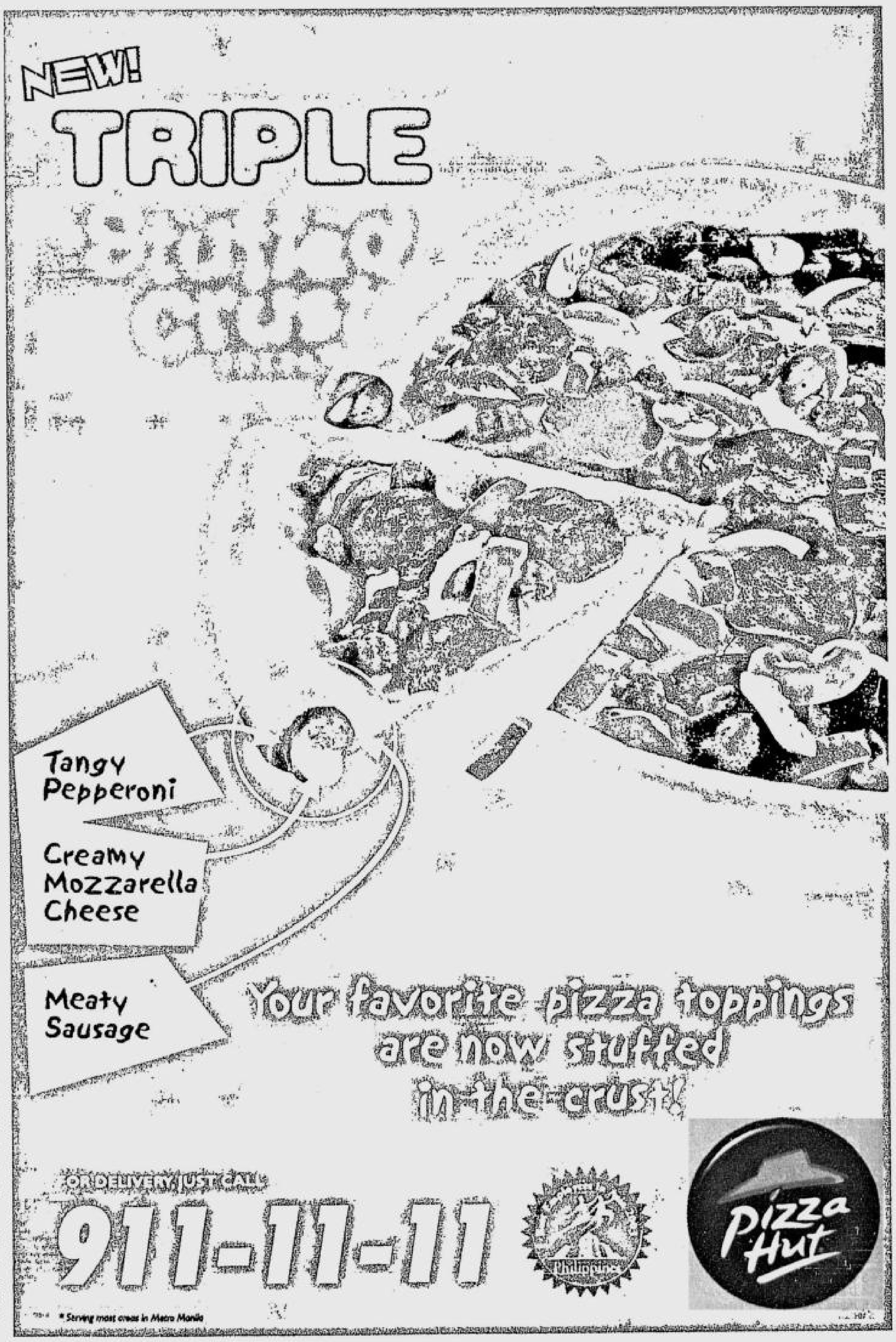
The new Starbucks Water Bottles (32oz and 20oz sizes) also hit the shelves again this month, durable and sized right for the upcoming hot and thirst-inspiring summer season.

The Collection also includes the Spring 2004 Lollipal, the 2004 Bunny Finger Puppet, and two exciting whole bean selections: Brazil Ipanema Bourbon and New Guinea Peaber.

Rustan Coffee Corporation, a member of the Rustan Group of Companies, operates all 61 Starbucks licensed stores across the country.



STARBUCKS tumbler



Graduation blowout

DINING OUT

AT CASA Armas, avail of the graduation package with a free bottle of Altozano Tempranillo wine. For P2,295++ (five to seven guests), avail of Croquetas de Pollo, Champinon al Ajillo (garlic mushrooms), Tabla Casa Armas Especial (mixed Spanish cold cuts), Paella Valenciana, Parilladas de Pescado (grilled assorted fish), Lengua Estofado, Flan al Caramelo. Casa Armas is located at 3/L of Greenbelt 3 (7574996); G/L, The Podium (6873370); and on Jupiter St. (8973605).

AT RICHMONDE Hotel's Richmonde Grill, every group of at least four persons dining during lunch or dinner entitles one graduate to a free meal. This may be availed upon presentation of the graduate's school ID and diploma or graduation rites program. Valid until April 30, except during Holy Week. Call 6387777.

AT DUSIT Hotel Nikko's Thien Duong Vietnamese Restaurant, pay only P2,400 for a group of four; P3,500 for a group of six; and P4,500 for a group of eight. The group set menus come with complimentary coffee or Vietnamese tea, round graduation cake and souvenir group shot. Gift certificates worth P250 are given to a group of eight and GCs worth P500 to a group of 10 at the Deli Shop until April 15. Fiesta San Miguel offers lunch and dinner set menus until April 15. Call 8673333.

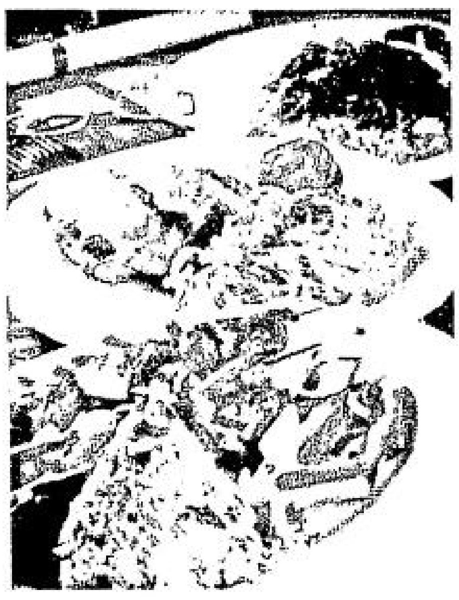
AT MANDARIN Oriental Manila until April 5 for every minimum food and beverage bill of P12,800+ at Tin Hau and P16,800+ at The Tivoli, graduates get a certificate for a complimentary massage treatment at The Oriental Spa. Call 7508888.

THE WESTIN Philippine Plaza's China Sea offers an eight-course set menu for P888+ per person for a minimum of eight diners. Café Plaza presents a lunch or dinner buffet of international favorites for P888+ per person. Alfiere features a set menu for eight at P888+ per person. The promos are valid until April 30. Call 5515555.

AT MANILA Pavilion Hotel's Music Room, avail of a special meal combo, consisting of bottles of beer and assorted appetizers. Available until March 31, 5 p.m. to 2 a.m. Call 5261212.

SIDEBAR CAFÉ launches five new cocktails infused with Pepsi X. Concocted with popular liquor bases, rum, vodka and even *lambanog*, the Great Excapes Cocktails include Kamikaze Thrill, Wallbanger's Hike & Screwdriver's-Trek. Sidebar's kitchen continues to dish out picas, pizza, and pastas to blend with these new cocktails. Sidebar Malate is at 1771 Adriatico St. (5255337) and Sidebar Ortigas at El Pueblo Real de Manila, ADB Ave. cor. J. Vargas, Ortigas Center, Pasig City (6317339).

MAKATI Shangri-La's Shang Palace features seafood, beef, vegetables and minced pork. The Island Café offers flavors from around the world for lunch and dinner buffet. Gourmet Corner presents Chocolate Tiramisu Gateau. New graduates eat for free when five other people dine in Inagiku, Red, Shang Palace and Island Café upon presentation of their diploma, until April 15. Call 8400884.



AT MARIO'S, graduates who dine with at least three companions will get a complimentary lunch or dinner set for one on their next visit. The set consists of soup of the day, Caesar's Salad, and any item from Casa Specials for the main course and dessert. Graduates must present their school ID with any of the following: diploma, certificate of completion, class or graduation picture with graduation date, class cards or transcript to avail of the promo, which is ongoing until April 30. Mario's has branches in Tomas Morato, QC and Baguio City. Call 7240196, 7239893 or 0920-9207521.

PESCADO en Salsa Verde (Lapu Lapu in Green Sauce) and Paella Valenciana (Saffron Rice with mixed Seafoods, Chicken, Pork and Vegetables), plus a free bottle of Altozano wine, are part of Casa Armas' graduation package.

SUPER SM HYPERMARKET SUCAT

3-Day Super Sale!

MARCH 19 • 20 • 21

SWING Now P2,499 Reg P3,699.00 SAVE 1200

CANON Printer & Scanner Package SAVE 1000 Now P4,495 Reg P5,495.00

DRESSER Now P1,999 Reg P2,999.00 SAVE 1000

MOUNTAIN BIKE Now P1,699 Reg P2,699.00 SAVE 1000

LEE Men's T-Shirt Now P299 Reg P429.75

LEE Ladies Jeans Now P499 Reg P849.75

MARUBISHI Mineral Water Pot Now P899 Reg P1,799.75

NOVA DVD Player P2,999 FREE 100 SM GIFT CHEQUE with every purchase

PENSONIC/MAGNUM Audio Video FREE 500 SM GIFT CHEQUE with minimum purchase of P3,000

NOVA Washing Machine P2,499 FREE 100 SM GIFT CHEQUE with every purchase

FEDDERS Aircon 1/2 HP P 7,495 FREE 16" DESK FAN with every purchase

50% OFF on selected items

SECOSANA Bags

DARLINGTON Socks

BURLINGTON Stockings

Get a chance to WIN one of 18 Washing Machines

For every P1,000 purchase entitles you to join.

AMERICAN HOME Live the Dream

SM Supercenter, 2nd Floor, Bgy. San Dionisio, Sucat, Parañaque

Parañaque city

Sucat Interchange

South Super Highway

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. A2-168 Series of 2004

Drink to the new graduate

PERK up your graduation party with the right kind of beverage. Whether it is an intimate dinner with the family or a get-together with fellow graduates, a little wine can make the occasion more festive.

Franzia may be just the right wine for the occasion. The wine comes in wiretaps, containers that are break-resistant and allow for adjustment to desired flow. This guarantees no unsightly stains on the floor from spillage.

With Franzia's wiretaps, you need not worry about any wine bottles breaking as people enjoy the food.

Franzia is available at all leading supermarkets nationwide.

Learn to be a restaurateur

THE MAYA Kitchen Culinary Arts Center is holding the Restaurant Operations seminars 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Friday to Saturday, March 26 to 27, for those wanting to go into the food business.

The course focuses on making the restaurant profitable without sacrificing quality and service. Topics to be discussed include budgeting and pricing of food, menu planning and basic restaurant management.

For those who like baking, Baking 2 or advanced seminar will be held 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturdays, March 20 and 27.

Students will be taught the rudiments of baker's percentage and math, and the different functions of a baker in the kitchen. Participants will learn to prepare different baked goods like pastries and cakes. They will also be taught how to make baked products from scratch or prepared mixes.

Other classes lined up at The Maya Culinary Arts Center are Korean Cooking, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., March 20; and Baking 1 or Basic Baking, 1:30-5 p.m., Tuesday to Friday, March 23 to 26. Enrollees in Baking 1 class will get a free cookbook.

Visit their office at 8/L, Liberty Bldg., A. Arnaiz Ave. (formerly Pasay Road), Makati City. Call 8921185 or 8925011 local 108, or e-mail mayakitchen@pacific.net.ph

The Insurance Commission joins the Philippine American Life and General Insurance Company in celebrating and honoring its outstanding sales underwriters for 2003.

I honor these men and women who have unselfishly given themselves to serve our countrymen by providing them a life insurance policy thereby securing the financial future of more Filipinos.

Today more than ever, our country is in need of individuals who, despite the challenges and difficulties of the times, have dedicatedly worked hard to stand behind their promises. May you carry on your humble mission in improving the lives of the Filipino people.

Again, in behalf of the Insurance Commission, I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to Philamlife's best and finest sales underwriters and agency leaders.

Mabuhay kayong lahat!

EDUARDO T. MALINIS
Insurance Commissioner

Congratulations to the hardworking men and women of Philamlife who have delivered strong sales results last fiscal year 2003. It is fitting that top performing agents and agency leaders like you be recognized in such a prestigious event.

The recognition you get as national sales champions serves as the fruit of your hard work, persistence, determination and dedication to the life insurance career. As life insurance professionals, you remain committed to providing financial security and protection to as many people, delivering service with competence, integrity, professionalism and excellence.

AIG's unsurpassed global network and financial strength have never been more valuable than they are today. We are faced with enhanced opportunities in so many parts of the world, given the breadth of our global network, the presence of AIG companies throughout the world, and the huge and ever-increasing number of products we offer. Our company's relentless focus on growth has made AIG's strength and success indisputable. AIG is a professional, creative and disciplined organization, committed to long-term growth.

On behalf of Philamlife and AIG, I would like to thank and congratulate all our National Honor Club awardees for contributing to the company's growth. May you remain steadfast in your desire to share the gift of life insurance and in your pursuit of sales excellence.

MAURICE R. GREENBERG
Chairman & Chief Executive Officer
American International Group, Inc. (AIG)
Chairman of the Board
Philamlife

It is with joy and pride that we once again recognize the most outstanding producers of Philamlife, particularly for the fiscal year 2003. Behind every great organization are selfless men and women who dedicate themselves to achieving excellence and to contributing significantly to company growth. You, our distinguished NRP awardees, have been the prime movers of Philamlife's continued excellence and market leadership for the past years.

Changes in the business environment create demand for greater expertise and a higher level of competence in life insurance selling & financial planning. Tougher competition and the growing sophistication of financial needs have made clients more demanding and discriminating. To stay ahead of competition, we have to look forward, move with change, seize opportunities, and grow by leaps and bounds. As National Awardees, I trust that you will be relentless in your pursuit of professional growth and excellence. Continuous learning and consistent growth would enable you to keep up with the changing times. As Philamlife's top producers, you should take the lead in bringing the company into greater heights of excellence and success.

On behalf of the Philamlife family, I would like to thank and salute our National Awardees for the job well done. May you continue to deliver stellar performance as competent life insurance professionals in the years to come.

Congratulations to all our NRP Awardees! Mabuhay kayong lahat!

JOSE L. CUISIA, JR.
President & Chief Executive Officer

We welcomed Fiscal Year 2003 with a "BREAKING BARRIERS" battlecry. And it was a tough journey since then.

The year saw many changes testing forth the endurance of our agency force month by month, week by week and later on, day by day. However, living up to our commitment to nothing but excellence, each of our associates were challenged to literally and figuratively break each one's internal and external barriers in order to achieve liberation from complacency and further strengthen one's drive to succeed.

Those who stood up and fought hard are now reaping the rewards of their hard work. In this year's National Recognition Program, we give tribute to Philamlife's gallant group of agents and agency leaders who have proven once more that "only the tough really gets going".

On a year filled with so much uncertainty, I take my hats off to our dear associates who really did break their own barriers! Mabuhay kayong lahat and congratulations to one and all.

JOSERNO R. STO. DOMINGO, FLMI, LUF
Executive Vice President-Sales & Marketing Group

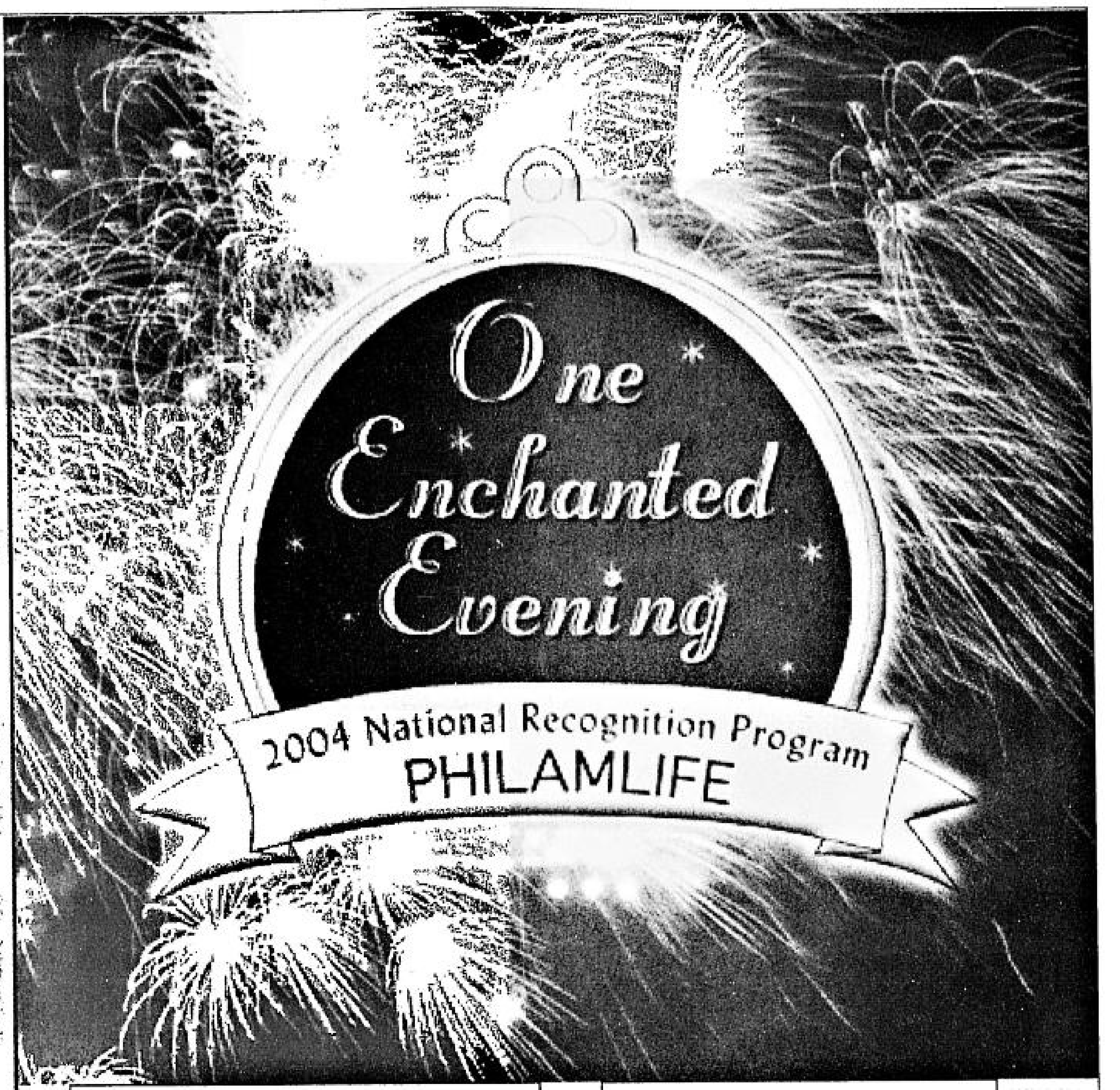
We faced an abundance of challenges in 2003. It was indeed a tough year, probably tougher than most that we have confronted in recent years. The major changes we had to deal with were enough to weaken the knees of the strongest of us. But unlike many, you responded with remarkable tenacity and exceptional resiliency, distinctive of a true Philamlifer bound for success.

This is the reason why we honor and give thanks to each one of you tonight. The inner strength and amazing character you demonstrated amidst all the tests last year was simply inspirational. It is with pride and admiration that I salute you.

As we move forward, let us look at the past with gratefulness for the wisdom it has given us and for the strength it now endows in us to reach even greater heights, towards a Quantum Leap. May each one of you keep that winning spirit alive so that you remain a constant shining example of excellence.

Mabuhay!

ARIEL G. CANTOS
Senior Vice President & Chief Agency Officer



THE PHILIPPINE AMERICAN LIFE AND GENERAL INSURANCE COMPANY

Hall of Fame

Philamlife honors the first recipient of the Hall of Fame award

Conferred to the Agency Manager who has built and developed a high performing sales team, demonstrated consistent growth and record-breaking new business production, and awarded Agency of the Year for ten consecutive years

Elevated to Philamlife's highest award category in agency management

JOSE ISAGANI F. ANTONIO

- Number 1 Agency (National) based on New Business production since 1993
- Number 1 Agency (Manila) based on New Business production since 1984
- First Agency to hit P100 million New Business premiums in a single year (achieved in 2000)
- Consistent New Business growth for the last 31 years
- Largest agency network with 7 agency sales offices and close to 500 sales agents and managers
- Produced two new Agencies: L.D. Roque Associates in 2000 and R. Bernardo Associates in 2002
- [illegible]

ASSOCIATES OF THE Year

Philamlife proudly hails its three most outstanding associates for 2003

They led the entire agency force with their inspiring and unmatched sales performance thereby standing TALLEST among all their peers. They are prime examples of success and achievement

ROSARIO C. SALIENTES
NUMBER 1 CAREER AGENT,
Salientes-Gonzalez Associates

SEGUNDINA O. TAN
NUMBER 1 UNIT MANAGER
Tan Associates

JOSE ISAGANI F. ANTONIO
NUMBER 1 AGENCY MANAGER
Antonio Associates

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SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT *award*

Philamlife's Top Career Agents and Agency Leaders who achieved the honor and distinction of being the Company's most productive sales professionals for Recognition Year 2003

Career Agent Category

Philamlife's Top Career Agents who achieved the honor and distinction of being the Company's most productive Career Agents for Recognition Year 2003.

They stand out among a field of more than 8,000 Career Agents nationwide

NATIONAL TOP CAREER AGENT

ROSARIO C. SALIENTES
Salientes-Gonzalez Associates

MANILA AGENCIES

GUEI TAY GI
Tan Associates
TOP MANILA

LOURDES M. DEL MUNDO
Del Mundo Associates
1st RUNNER-UP MANILA

PROVINCIAL AGENCIES

RODOLFO M. MALLARI
Pampanga-Del Rosario Agency
TOP PROVINCIAL

MARISSA V. TAGUINOD
INV-Mata Agency
1st RUNNER-UP PROVINCIAL

Agency Manager Category

Philamlife's Top Agency Managers who achieved the honor and distinction of being the Company's most productive Agency Managers for Recognition Year 2003

NATIONAL TOP AGENCY MANAGER

JOSE ISAGANI F. ANTONIO
Antonio Associates

MANILA AGENCIES

LOURDES M. DEL MUNDO
Del Mundo Associates
TOP MANILA

VERONICA S. GONZALEZ
Salientes-Gonzalez Associates
1st RUNNER-UP MANILA

ROSARIO C. SALIENTES
Salientes-Gonzalez Associates
1st RUNNER-UP MANILA

PROVINCIAL AGENCIES

MELBA L. TAN
Cebu-Tan Agency
TOP PROVINCIAL

JOHN P. MATA, JR.
INV-Mata Agency
1st RUNNER-UP PROVINCIAL

Unit Manager Category

Philamlife's Top Unit Managers who achieved the honor and distinction of being the Company's most productive Unit Managers for Recognition Year 2003

NATIONAL TOP UNIT MANAGER

SEGUNDINA O. TAN
Tan Associates

MANILA AGENCIES

MA. ZENAIDA N. ANTONIO
Antonio Associates
TOP MANILA

LOURDES E. BERNARDO
Bernardo Associates
1st RUNNER-UP MANILA

PROVINCIAL AGENCIES

ADORACION P. PENALES
Cebu-Tan Agency
TOP PROVINCIAL

EMERITA P. CARAO
INV-Mata Agency
1st RUNNER-UP PROVINCIAL

CHAIRMAN'S CABINET

This exclusive honor club, dedicated to Philamlife's Chairman, Maurice R. Greenberg, belongs to the top 15% of Philamlife's outstanding Agency Leaders

AGENCY CATEGORY

JOSE ISAGANI F. ANTONIO
Antonio Associates

LOURDES M. DEL MUNDO
Del Mundo Associates

VERONICA S. GONZALEZ
Salientes-Gonzalez Associates

ROSARIO C. SALIENTES
Salientes-Gonzalez Associates

DIRECT UNIT CATEGORY

VERONICA S. GONZALEZ
Salientes-Gonzalez Associates

ROSARIO C. SALIENTES
Salientes-Gonzalez Associates

REYNALDO N. MORTEL
Mortel Associates

SEGUNDINA O. TAN
Tan Associates

MA. ZENAIDA N. ANTONIO
Antonio Associates

JOSE ISAGANI F. ANTONIO
Antonio Associates

WILFRED M. YU
Yu Associates

ANTONINA A. DEL ROSARIO
Pampanga-Del Rosario Agency

PRESIDENT'S CABINET

In the tradition of excellence, these Agency Leaders have distinguished themselves with exceptional First Year Commission Income for Recognition Year 2003

AGENCY CATEGORY

JUANA TAN
Tan Associates

MELBA L. TAN
Cebu-Tan Agency

REYNALDO N. MORTEL
Mortel Associates

JOHN P. MATA, JR.
INV-Mata Agency

RUBEN E. FALAGUE
Laguna-Falague Agency

PRISCILO E. COMIA
Batangas-Comia Agency

CRISA G. NICDAO
Nicdao Associates

ERIC G. NICDAO
Nicdao Associates

JULIUS A. REYES
Nueva-Reyes Agency

ENRICO A. CAPULE
Capule Associates

LEORANDO G. CUNANAN
Batangas-Cunanan Agency

ANTONIO R. VARIAS
Cavite-Varias Agency

SERAPIO G. MAUNAHAN
Rizal-Maunahan Agency

MANUEL Y. USON
Uson Associates

ISMAEL L. MELENDRES, JR.
Melendres Associates

CECILIA A. MELENDRES
Melendres Associates

WILFRED M. YU
Yu Associates

FERNANDO A. COSTE, JR.
N. Luzon-Coste Agency

ANTONINA A. DEL ROSARIO
Pampanga-Del Rosario Agency

AURORA M. MATURINO
Bataan-Maturino Agency

PATRICIA E. BAGUI
Bagui Associates

NANCY R. BAUTISTA
Espiritu Associates

HENRY M. ESPIRITU
Espiritu Associates

FLORANTE R. PINEDA †
Tarlac-Pineda Agency

PROCESO G. MENDOZA
Mendoza Associates

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PRESIDENT'S CABINET

DIRECT UNIT CATEGORY

ISMAEL L. MELENDRES, JR.
Melendres Associates

CECILIA A. MELENDRES
Melendres Associates

ADORACION P. PENALES
Cebu-Tan Agency

RUBEN E. FALAGUE
Laguna-Falague Agency

PABLO O. TAMALA, JR.
Pagadian-Tamala Agency

LOURDES E. BERNARDO
Bernardo Associates

LUCILA H. KIERULF
Del Mundo Associates

EMERITA P. CARAO
NW-Mata Agency

LEAH E. PONIO
L. Ponio Associates

EDUARDO A. FORDAN
Antonio Associates

JAMES WALTER P. CAPILI
Zambrano Associates

GINA Z. MENDOZA
Mendoza Associates

CONSTANCIA S. VERGEL DE DIOS
Salientes-Gonzales Associates

VICENTE G. TAN
Cebu-Tan Agency

ROMEO M. RAMOS
Zambrano Associates

NANCY R. BAUTISTA
Espiritu Associates

HENRY M. ESPIRITU
Espiritu Associates

FLORANTE R. PINEDA†
Tarlac-Pineda Agency

SERAPIO G. MAUNAHAN
Rizal-Maunahan Agency

LEONARDO M. PALCUTAN
Iloilo-Palcutan Agency

MA. ELENA G. ASTURIAS
Del Mundo Associates

JOSEFINA S. HIPOL
Baguio Associates

CARLOS C. VENERACION
Pagadian Associates

SUSAN M. GAYATIN
Cebu-Tan Agency

ANATALIA W. BRIONES
Baguio Associates

CORAZON KIANG
CK Ang Associates

RODOLFO A. MANGALIAG
Mangaliag Associates

ISABEL C. TRANGIA
Batangas-Corona Agency

NILDA C. UY
Del Mundo Associates

MA. CRISTINA R. MENDOZA
Bernardo Associates

RAMONCITO R. MALIWANAG
Quezon-Maliwanag Agency

MARIO A. DE GUZMAN
N. Luzon-Costes Agency

NELIA L. LAUDICO
Del Mundo Associates

JOHN P. MATA, JR.
NW-Mata Agency

AURORA M. MATURINO
Bataan-Maturino Agency

HENRY L. EVANGELISTA
Davao-Evangelista Agency

GREGORIO V. TONGKO
Tongko Associates

TERESITA G. MONTEVERDE, LUTCF
Tan Associates

EDNA A. GAN, LLIF
Gan Associates

ISABELA P. CARREON
Salientes-Gonzales Associates

LYNARD M. MOLO
Cavite-Amizo Agency

IRENE P. NERY
Zamboanga-Mata Agency

JOSEPHINE N. MORTEL
Mortel Associates

LILIA M. BORROMEO
NW-Mata Agency

EMILIE M. BOBE
Bacolod-Bobe Agency

PHILAM LIFE

FOUNDER'S CIRCLE

A five-time member of the Chairman's Board earns the rank and privilege to be elevated to Philamlife's highest honor club

This club extols the memory of Philamlife's Founder and First President, Earl Caroll

These are the true professionals who represent excellence and commitment

ROSARIO C. SALIENTES
Salientes-Gonzales Associates

GUE TAY GI
Tan Associates

LOURDES M. DEL MUNDO
Del Mundo Associates

MA. ELENA G. ASTURIAS
Del Mundo Associates

LOURDES E. BERNARDO
Bernardo Associates

RODOLFO M. MALLARI
Pampanga-Del Rosario Agency

SHIRLEY L. CO
Tan Associates

ZENAIDA A. PALMES
Del Mundo Associates

ANUNCIACION C. BIROG
Del Mundo Associates

JACINTA Y. PHOA
Tan Associates

ANTONINA S. SOLOMON
Salientes-Gonzales Associates

YOLANDA A. MORTEL, LUTCF
Mortel Associates

LUCILA H. KIERULF
Del Mundo Associates

NANCY R. BAUTISTA
Espiritu Associates

NILDA C. UY
Del Mundo Associates

CORAZON KIANG
CK Ang Associates

CHAN SIU ENG
Tan Associates

LETICIA G.O. ANG
Tan Associates

SALUD P. CAPILI
Zambrano Associates

PHILAM LIFE

CHAIRMAN'S BOARD

This exclusive honor club, dedicated to Philamlife's Chairman, Maurice Greenberg, belongs to the top 15% of Philamlife's outstanding Career Agents

They are the true pacesetters of the agency force who exemplify growth and strength, characteristics of intensely dedicated men and women

MA. TERESA D. HERNANDEZ
Salientes-Gonzales Associates

GEMMA G. LUZADAS
Mortel Associates

KHRISTINA ERIKA M. RAYALA
Mortel Associates

FLORENTINA M. ARDIDON
Ardidon Associates

MA. ZENAIDA N. ANTONIO
Antonio Associates

RUBINA M. LIM
Salientes-Gonzales Associates

LOURDES V. GLORIA, LUTCF
Salientes-Gonzales Associates

MARISSA V. TAGUINOD
NW-Mata Agency

REYNOLDA GAN
Gan Associates

THERESITA N. PANOPIO
Salientes-Gonzales Associates

EDEN L. JALOSJOS
Del Mundo Associates

ESTELA C. BELEN
Laguna-Falague Agency

YRANEE L. BELITA
CDO-Agsn-Bukidnon-Chua

MILAGROS P. PINEDA
Bataan-Maturino Agency

MILAGROS I. GATDULA
Laguna-Falague Agency

LILY T. SY CHUA
Tano Associates

MA. FATIMA R. RODRIGUEZ
Pampanga-Del Rosario Agency

PERLA O. ARGUELLES
Iloilo-Arguelles Agency

GLORIA P. YAP
Cebu-Tan Agency

ELAINE R. TINSAY
CDO-Agsn-Bukidnon-Chua

JULIE D. MANALANSAN
Bernardo Associates

IQA
INTERNATIONAL QUALITY AWARD

The mark of a career underwriter is exemplified by this worldwide symbol of excellence. Membership to this club is measured by persistency --- the number of clients who keep their policies in-force for many years. Persistent business is the seal of a true professional.

NG CHO LIAN
27 years

JACINTA Y. PHOA
25 years

SHIRLEY L. CO
21 years

CHAN SIU ENG
21 years

ESTRELLITA U. TAN
10 years

ROMEO AUGUSTO N. MACASAET IV
4 years

LUCILA R. OCAMPO
3 years

FLORA G. ARELLANO
3 years

GERALDINE MARIE A. LIMPO
3 years

VIRGINIA G. CORDERO
2 years

THERESITA N. PANOPIO
2 years

MA. VIVIENNE L. SOLON
2 years

MARICAR S. MENDOZA
2 years

ADELAIDE H. YAP
1 year

ROGELIO S. UY
1 year

NILDA C. UY
1 year

ERNESTO A. LIM
1 year

FERDINAND S. CRUZ
1 year

EDUARDO A. FORDAN
1 year

LILY T. SY CHUA
1 year

LUISITO S. LAUDICO
1 year

EDILBERTO C. LOBO
1 year

ROSARIO C. SALIENTES
1 year

MA. NANETTE R. MENDOZA
1 year

CLAUDIA R. FUENTES
1 year

ANA MAY V. REGALA
1 year

PERCY M. GUZMAN
1 year

MA. THERESA E. LUCILA
1 year

ELSIE G. GALLEGO
1 year

NOEMI V. DEL ROSARIO
1 year

EVANGELISTA L. MACANAS
1 year

MA. LUZ U. BAHIA
1 year

ZENAIDA L. MATIAS
1 year

MA. LUZ S. VENCIO
1 year

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Dovza Associates

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Cebu-Tan Agency

CRISTY B. CALIMLIM
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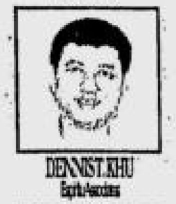
ALICIA G. BENDERO
Tacurong-Pecon Agency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Del Mundo Associates

ZORAYDA DAISY U. SERRANO
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Bulacan-Maturino Agency

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Quezon-Malvar Agency

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Salientes-Gonzales Associates

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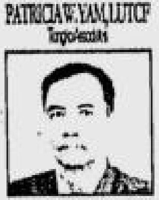
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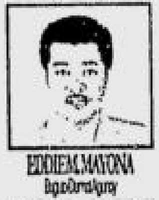
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[illegible]

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[illegible]

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Without a doubt, the MDRT shines out as the most prestigious association of life insurance professionals worldwide

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[illegible]

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Court of the Table

CORAZON KIANG
Honor Roll-Qualifying Member

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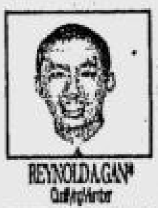
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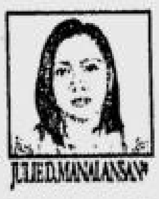
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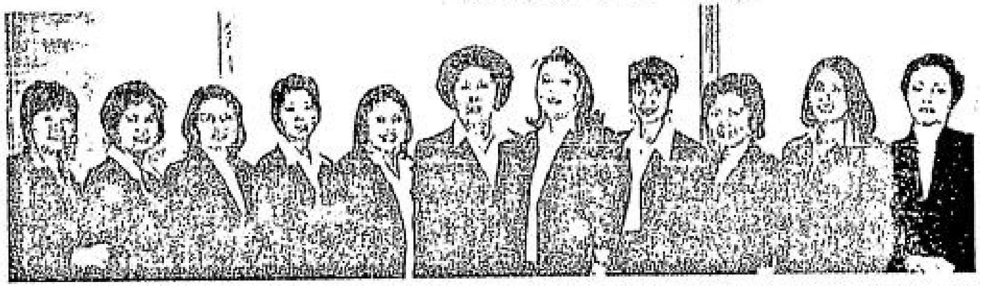
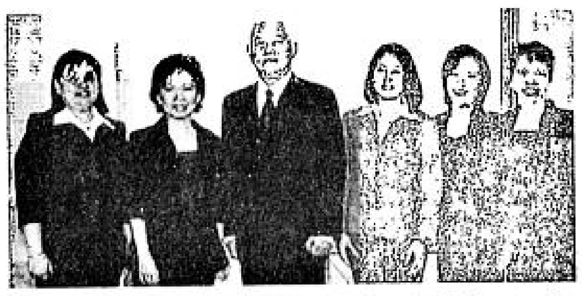


MILLION DOLLAR ROUND TABLE MEMBERS: (L-R) Lucila H. Kierulf, Anunciacion C. Birog, Felicidad B. Dintasan, Eden L. Jalosjos, Zenaida A. Palmes, Lourdes M. Del Mundo, Marilen G. Asturias (Life and Qualifying Member), Ma. Antonietta O. Del Mundo, Ma. Luz S. Vencio, Nilda C. Uy, Ma. Theresa L. Solon Not in photo: Nancy G. Tan

PREMIER AGENTS CLUB: (L-R) Ma. Theresa L. Solon (Gold), Ma. Luz S. Vencio (Silver), Eden L. Jalosjos (Gold), Lourdes M. Del Mundo (Platinum), Nilda C. Uy (Gold), Prescilla L. Rivero (Silver), Ma. Vivianne L. Solon (Silver)



INTERNATIONAL QUALITY AWARD: (L-R) Noemi V. Del Rosario, Ma Luz S. Vencio, Luisito S. Laudico, Nilda C. Uy, Ma. Vivienne L. Solon, Ma.Nanette F. Mendoza

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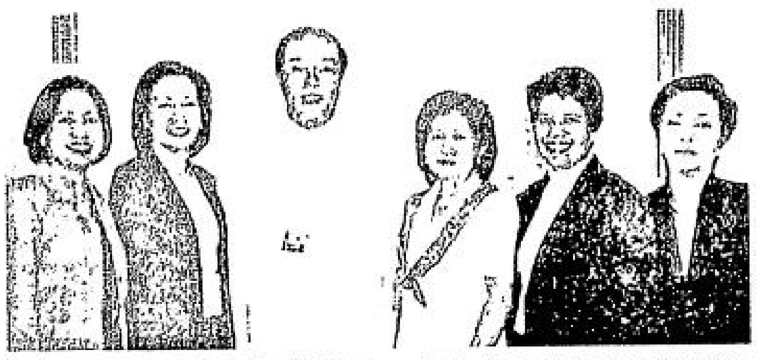

SECTORAL AWARDEES (L-R) Loida B. Cabarra, Evelyn T. Tuason, Leopoldo B. Llorente, Belen M. Quiogue, Rizalina DL De Guzman, Ma. Theresa L. Solon

EAGLE CLUB AWARDEES. Back row (L-R) Adelaida O. San Mateo, Roberto L. Caudal, Reynaldo R. Birog, Edito D. Maligsay, Alejandro C. Nolasco, Hermogenes A. Pacheco, Ramel M. Paris Front row (L-R) Soledad M. Mamiit, Estela C. Tan, Norma A. de Venecia, Susana A. Turingan, Ana Viola V. Laquian, Sarah D. Delos Reyes, Imelda A. Murriel, Sherlita D. Arquisola, Josette A. Revesencio, Noemi V. Del Rosario Not in photo: Anilino P. Cruz, Amparo R. Quinan, Ma. Cristina P. De Ubago

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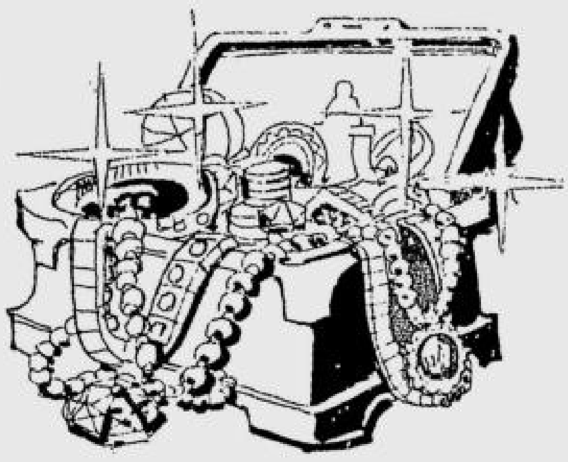
PHILAM LIFE

Presenting... ANTONIO ASSOCIATES JEWELS

The ISAGANI ANTONIO ASSOCIATES, the largest marketing group in Philamlife, scored another banner year in 2003. It ended the year with another positive growth performance, thereby earning for itself an enviable record of 31 years of consistent growth since it was established in 1973. Garnering again for the 11th year the prestigious awards of Top National Agency and Special Achievement Award in Philamlife for 2003, the ANTONIO ASSOCIATES has continued its territorial expansion when it opened another mall business center in SM City Lucena.

Milestone after milestone, that's what the ANTONIO ASSOCIATES agents and leaders are committed to achieve. Thanks to its JEWELS – a group of excellent, highly trained, and motivated financial planners!

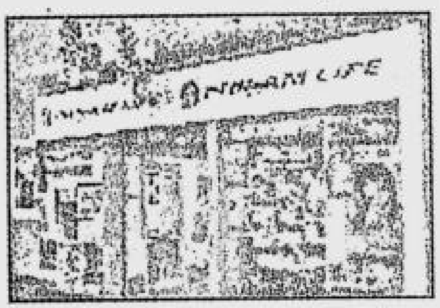


7 JEWELS: Bringing Antonio Associates closer to our sales agents and clients, we have put up a network of business centers in Metro Manila and neighboring provinces under capable sectoral operations managers.

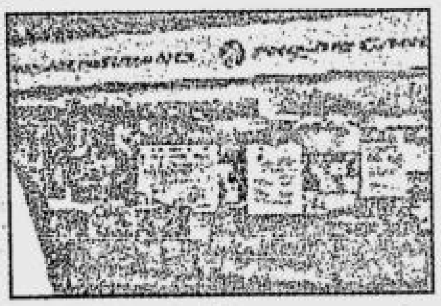
ANTONIO ASSOCIATES BUSINESS CENTER SM CITY MANILA

ROSEMARIE YAUN
Mall Manager

ANTONIO ASSOCIATES BUSINESS CENTER SM CITY BACOOR



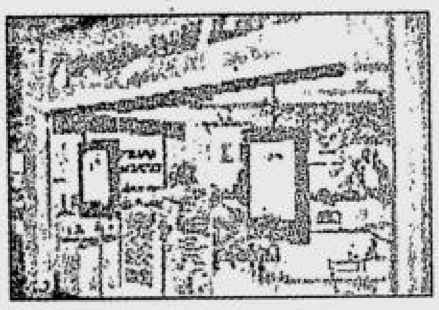
LIBERTY TIMAJO
Mall Manager



ANTONIO ASSOCIATES BUSINESS CENTER SM SOUTHMALL

LORELIE ALVIAR
Mall Manager

ANTONIO ASSOCIATES BUSINESS CENTER FESTIVAL MALL

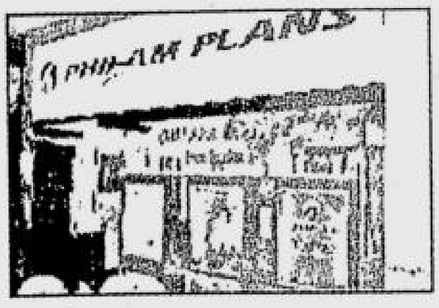


EDITH PESTAÑAS
Mall Manager

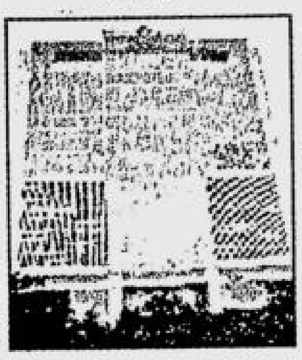
ANTONIO ASSOCIATES BUSINESS CENTER PACIFIC MALL, LEGASPI CITY

CRISTINA BACLAO
Mall Manager

ANTONIO ASSOCIATES BUSINESS CENTER SM CITY LUCENA



RAQUEL REFORMA
Mall Manager



ANTONIO ASSOCIATES BUSINESS CENTER PHILAMLIFE BLDG., ALABANG, MUNTINLUPA CITY

MARLENE MICOSA
Mall Manager

WORLD CLASS PRODUCERS OF THE YEAR

MA. ZENAIDA ANTONIO · NORA CRISOSTOMO · ANTHONY DE LEON · MA. EDITHA PEÑAFLOR · EMELITA ABANTO · VIRGILIO HERNANDEZ

TOP AGENCY PRODUCERS

MA. ZENAIDA ANTONIO

MA. EDITHA PEÑAFLOR · ANTHONY DE LEON · ISABELITA CASTOR
EMELITA ABANTO · SYLVIA EVANGELISTA · VIRGILIO HERNANDEZ
TERESITA MANALO · AIDA MATTI · CONSOLACION BLANCO
ANTONELLA ALMEIDA · AMELIA RONQUILLO · ELENA ENRIQUEZ
NORA CRISOSTOMO · LOURDES OLIVEROS · HERMA FORMELOZA
ROSALINIE DE PADUA · TERESITA ROMASANTA · JUNE NERY
JOCELYN SECRETARIO · FLOCERFIDA SARMIENTO · IGNACIO AQUINO
AVELINA CADORNIGA · MONALIZA MALABANAN · AUREA SALAZAR

TOP ROOKIE AGENTS

JOSEFINA ARAPAN · MONALIZA MALABANAN

TOP ANNUAL PUSHERS

EMELITA ABANTO · JOSEFINA ARAPAN

ISABELITA CASTOR · ANTHONY DE LEON · SYLVIA EVANGELISTA · MA. EDITHA PEÑAFLOR

TOP AGENTS IN PERSISTENCY

ANA MAY REGALA · ANTHONY DE LEON · SYLVIA EVANGELISTA · AMELIA RONQUILLO

J L MENDOZA SALES EXCELLENCE AWARD

The three associates of the year whose excellent performance in 2003 in new business production, persistency and growth achievement over 2002, exemplified the highest standards of sales excellence- a legacy of our dearly departed MDRT life-time member, JEANETTE L. MENDOZA.

ANTHONY DE LEON · ISABELITA CASTOR · EMELITA ABANTO

TOP AGENCY LEADERS OF THE YEAR

MA. ZENAIDA ANTONIO · ORLANDO ABANTO · EDUARDO FORDAN · GLICERIA DE LEON · AIDA HERNANDEZ · ROGELIO CRISOSTOMO · EDERLINA OLEGARIO

IRENE NUEVO · CESAR OÑATE · MA. CARMELITA AQUINO · NOEMI POBLADOR

Join us and profit from our experience and reputation...

ISAGANI ANTONIO ASSOCIATES

11th Floor, Philamlife Bldg., Madrigal Business Park, Alabang, Muntinlupa City 807-4314 / 0917-5591723

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